

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
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State of California
 The Resources Agency
 Department of Fish and Game
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
 Minutes
 May 14, 2003

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May 14, 2003

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Wednesday, May 14, 2003, in Room 113 of the State Capitol in Sacramento, California. The meeting was called to order at 10:10 A.M. by Chairman Michael Flores. Mr. Flores introduced Mr. Robert Hight, Director, Department of Fish and Game, Mr. Fred Klass, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance, Mr. Jeff Arthur from Assembly member Hannah Beth Jackson's office, Ms. Kristie Stauffacher from Senator Michael Machado's office and Mr. Al Wright, Executive Director of the Board.

4. Roll CallWILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Flores, Chairperson

President, Fish and Game Commission

Fred Klass, Program Budget Manager

Vice, Steve Peace, Member

Director, Department of Finance

Robert C. Hight, Member

Director, Department of Fish and Game

JOINT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Assembly member Patty Berg

Assembly member Fran Pavley

Kristie Stauffacher,

Vice, Senator Michael J. Machado

Jeff Arthur,

Vice, Assembly member Hannah-Beth Jackson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Al Wright

Staff Present: Al Wright, Executive Director
Georgia Lipphardt, Assistant Executive Director
John Donnelly, Chief Land Agent
Marilyn Cundiff, Public Land Management Specialist
Linda Drake, Senior Land Agent
Jenny Smith, Staff Services Analyst
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist
Bonnie Turner, Public Land Management Specialist
Scott Clemons, Public Land Management Specialist
Tony Chappelle, Public Land Management Specialist
Gary Cantrell, Research Analyst
Debbie Townsend, Senior Land Agent
Dave Means, Senior Land Agent
William Gallup, Senior Land Agent
Steven Christensen, Senior Land Agent
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent
Terri Muzik, Assistant Land Agent
Elena Salas, Secretary
Jan Beeding, Office Technician
Maureen Rivera, Executive Assistant

Others Present: Laura Kuhn, City of Scotts Valley
Laura Perry, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Debbie Muth, Friends of Glenwood
Cliff Barrett, City of Scotts Valley
Stephany Aguilar, City of Scotts Valley
Nick VanBruggen, Friends of Glenwood
Grey Hayes, California Native Plant Society
Mary Grande
Gregory Reden
Eric Jessen, Orange Co. Harbors, Beaches and Parks District
Scott Ferguson, Trust for Public Land
Jennifer Johnson, The Nature Conservancy
Nita Vail, California Rangeland Trust
Kevin Kester, California Rangeland Trust
John Carlon, River Partners
Rob Kane, California Department of Parks and Recreation
Rorie Skei, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Don Koch, Department of Fish and Game
Stephen Burrell, City of Hermosa Beach
Patrick Fitzmorris, Ducks Unlimited
Vince Thompson, Ducks Unlimited
Virginia Getz, Ducks Unlimited
Susanne Schutz, Lake County Land Trust
Michael Friel, Lake County Land Trust
Roberta Lyons, Lake County Land Trust

Sean Curtis, County of Modoc
Pat Cantrall, County of Modoc
Carole Kelley, California Native Plant Society
Julie Edwards Levy
Armand Gonzales, Department of Fish and Game
Jeanne Ulwelling
Margo Hober
Aaron Foxworthy, Sheppard and Mullin
Dan Dellinger, Office of Senator Rico Oller
Kathleen Farren, Trust for Public Land
Mark Spannagel, Office of Assembly member Doug Lamalfa
Deborah Lambe, MRCA
Judi Tanasi, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Assembly member John Laird
Preston Lee Leslie, Leslie Salt
Richard Grimes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Hannah Levy, Students for Glenwood Nature Preserve
Susan Krevitt, Friends of Glenwood
Pamela Milligan, Riverside County
Theresa O'Rourke, The Nature Conservancy
Glen Williams, American Land Conservancy

Due to the large number of people attending this meeting in support of item number 36, Glenwood Meadows, Santa Cruz County, Mr. Wright suggested item 36 be considered early in the meeting. The Board members agreed. Mr. Wright continued and explained the following informational items.

2. Funding Status as of May 14, 2003 (Informational)

a. 2002-03 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget - Minor Projects.....	\$500,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(499,810.00)
Unallocated Balance.....	\$190.00

b. 2000-01 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Chapter 395, Statutes of 2000, San Francisco Baylands....	\$25,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(50,000.00)
2002-03 December Revision (Mid-year Reduction)	(24,950,000.00)
Unallocated Balance.....	\$0.00

c. 2002-03 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget	\$20,664,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(4,144,019.00)

Unallocated Balance \$16,519,981.00

d. 2001-02 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget \$19,963,500.00
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (11,925,466.74)
Unallocated Balance \$8,038,033.26

e. 2000-01 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget\$115,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (114,435,427.00)
2002-03 December Revision (Mid-year Reduction)(564,573.00)
Unallocated Balance \$0.00

f. 2000-01 Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and
Flood Protection Bond Fund (River Protection Subaccount)

Governor's Budget \$14,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (12,540,000.00)
Unallocated Balance \$1,460,000.00

g. 2000-01 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund

Governor's Budget\$216,125,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (139,187,444.67)
Unallocated Balance \$76,937,555.33

Governor's Budget \$14,562,000.00
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (8,650,182.00)
Unallocated Balance \$5,911,818.00

h. 1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund

Continuously Appropriated \$38,000,000.00
[Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]
Less Previous Board Allocations..... (15,828,783.33)
Unallocated Balance \$22,171,216.67

i. 2002-03 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund

Governor's Budget \$2,500,000.00
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)
Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002 \$4,800,000.00

Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002 \$19,200,000.00

- j. 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund
 - Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)\$273,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations..... (10,594,633.07)
 - Unallocated Balance\$262,405,366.93
- k. 2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002
 - Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572)....\$890,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations..... (150,677,180.73)
 - Unallocated Balance\$739,322,819.27

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a) and (b)	\$190.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (c) and (d).....	\$24,558,014.26
General Fund (e).....	\$0.00
Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Bond Fund (f).....	\$1,460,000.00
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (g) and (h).....	\$105,020,590.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (i) and (j)	\$288,905,366.93
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (k)	\$739,322,819.27

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000

Total Tax Credit Available, Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000.....	\$100,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Approved Tax Credit for Donated Property ..	(36,884,984.00)
Tax Credit Available	\$63,115,016.00

Mr. Wright asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the above informational items. There were none.

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 through 21)

Mr. Flores requested the Consent Calendar be heard at the end of the meeting following consideration of the other projects.

Following consideration of items 22 through 43, excluding item 38 which was withdrawn from this agenda, Mr. Wright reported that on the consent calendar the Board requested approval of minutes from the November 22, 2002 and February 11, 2003 meetings. Mr. Wright stated that Ms. Annette Porini was serving for the Department of Finance at the November 22 meeting and she sent an email on May 9, 2003 indicating she reviewed the minutes and recommended approval. Mr. Wright also stated that several letters of support for projects on the consent calendar were received, including letters from Don Knabe, Chairman Pro-tem, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; Bill Gaines, Director, California Waterfowl Association; Senator Wesley Chesbro; Gary Lewis, Chairman, Lake County Board of Supervisor; Assembly member Patty Berg; Burt Bundy, Sacramento River Conservation Area; Denny Bungarz, Chairman, Glenn County Board of Supervisors and Brian Calhoun, Chairman, Fresno City Council. A letter was received from John Merz, Sacramento River Conservation Area, supporting items 17 and 18 and requesting additional information regarding items 19 and 20 (letter attached).

Mr. Flores stressed the importance of providing compatible public access whenever possible for the proposed projects on the Consent Calendar.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 4 through 21, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein.

Motion carried.

***4. Approval of Minutes – November 22, 2002 and February 11, 2003**

Approval of the minutes of the November 22, 2002 and February 11, 2003 meetings of the Wildlife Conservation Board was recommended.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, Mr. Robert Hight moved that the Board approve the minutes of the November 22, 2002 and February 11, 2003 meetings as proposed.

Motion carried.

*5. Recovery of Funds

The following projects previously authorized by the Board are now completed, and some have balances of funds that can be recovered and returned to their respective funds. It was recommended that the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed.

\$13,030,986.65 to the General Fund
\$3,051,101.21 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water,
Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund
\$1,283,932.20 to the Habitat Conservation Fund

GENERAL FUND

Bolsa Point Ranches, San Mateo County

Allocated	\$10,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-10,001,104.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,896.00

Horseshoe Lake Fishing Pier, Butte County

Allocated	\$89,270.00
Expended	<u>-88,906.92</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$363.08

Lake Tahoe Public Access, Parking Lot, Placer County

Allocated	\$484,135.00
Expended	<u>-484,130.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5.00

Owl Creek Forest, Humboldt County

Allocated	\$80,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-67,116,356.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,883,644.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, East Grasslands (Castle Land and Cattle),
Phase III, Merced County

Allocated	\$178,500.00
Expended	<u>-53,965.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$124,535.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, East Grasslands (Duck Slough), Merced County

Allocated	\$324,000.00
Expended	<u>-323,999.98</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$ 0.02

Wetland Habitat Restoration, East Grasslands (San Felipe Ranch), Merced County

Allocated	\$110,000.00
Expended	<u>-96,456.45</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,543.55

Total General Fund **\$13,030,986.65**

SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND

Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$4,286,600.00
Expended	<u>-4,283,676.07</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,923.93

Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve, Expansion 6 - 11 and Further Expansions (Sand Source Corridor Unit), Riverside County

Allocated	\$1,230,000.00
Expended	<u>-345,872.72</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$884,127.28

East Sacramento County Blue Oak Legacy Area, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$2,005,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,000,950.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,050.00

Fall River Wildlife Area, Shasta County

Allocated	\$2,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,000,000.00

Point St. George, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$1,500,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,340,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$160,000.00

**Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$3,051,101.21**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Bair Island Restoration Plan, San Mateo County

Allocated	\$75,000.00
Expended	<u>-75,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Fall River Wildlife Area, Shasta County

Allocated	\$1,170,000.00
Expended	<u>-6,834.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,163,166.00

Kern Valley Floor HCP, Kern County

Allocated	\$909,500.00
Expended	<u>-849,350.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$60,150.00

Lake Earl Wildlife Area, Expansion 23, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$154,000.00
Expended	<u>-149,988.39</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,011.61

Sacramento River Conservation Area, Expansion 4 and 5, Glenn County

Allocated	\$4,423,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,399,160.60</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$23,839.40

Stone Corral Ecological Reserve, Expansion 2, Tulare County

Allocated	\$11,000.00
Expended	<u>-804.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,196.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Coast Cattle, Merced County

Allocated	\$23,900.00
Expended	<u>-12,067.76</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$11,832.24

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Joice Island Wildlife Area, Solano County

Allocated	\$134,600.00
Expended	<u>-124,320.31</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,279.69

Wetland Habitat Restoration, North Grasslands
(Lone Tree Ranch), Merced County

Allocated	\$40,000.00
Expended	<u>-39,542.74</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$457.26

Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$1,283,932.20

- *6. Hermosa Beach Fishing Pier Improvements, \$324,270.00
Los Angeles County

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the City of Hermosa Beach to improve the existing Hermosa Beach Fishing Pier by renovating the entrance way to the pier and by constructing a new, ADA-compliant public restroom adjacent to the pier. The pier is located west of the intersection of Pier Avenue and The Strand, within the City of Hermosa Beach.

The original Hermosa Beach Pier was constructed in 1904 and functioned mainly as a fishing pier. In 1963, the Wildlife Conservation Board entered into a partnership with the City of Hermosa Beach to construct a new concrete fishing pier to replace the existing storm-battered wooden pier. The new pier contained a concrete block building, restrooms, fish cleaning sinks, benches, and drinking fountains along its 1,140 ft. length. The City entered into a cooperative lease and operating agreement with the State in 1963 and has operated and maintained the pier since that time. In 1989, the Board again partnered with the City and funded repairs and renovations to the end of the pier that had been damaged by a major winter storm in 1988. The

pier is a popular destination for anglers and tourists with an estimated 440,000 people visiting the pier each year. The pier is well known for its fishing opportunities.

Halibut, mackerel, sand shark, skate, stingray, perch, sand bass, striped bass, barracuda, smelt, anchovies (bait fish), white croaker, crabs, and California lobster can be caught off the pier, while other visitors use the pier to gain a different view on the City of Hermosa Beach.

The City and County are in the process of a phased renovation project at the pier and its adjacent buildings to modernize housing for lifeguards, increase the parking areas for vehicles, provide boat docking under the pier for law enforcement, install ADA-compliance restrooms, construct a viewing stand and provide more amenities for visitors. Last year, new light bollards, metal railing, fishing cleaning sinks and benches were added to the pier.

The current proposal will add a new ADA compliant restroom next to the pier and improve the concrete walkway entrance to the pier. Along with the Board, both the City and the County are contributing to the planned improvements on and adjacent to the pier. The City has agreed to renew the lease and operating agreement with the State for the pier for a twenty-five year period.

Cost estimates for the project, which have been reviewed by staff, are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Mobilization	\$85,162.00
Demolition	80,246.00
Earthwork/grading	15,208.00
Drainage	50,000.00
Concrete/Paving	290,785.00
Fencing and Railing	32,500.00
Site Amenities	18,500.00
Building and Structures	1,628,345.00
Electrical	100,000.00
Utilities	100,000.00
Planting and Irrigation	22,070.00
Engineering	100,000.00
Contingencies	252,281.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$2,775,097.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:

Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Space	\$141,723.00
City of Hermosa Beach	2,309,374.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	324,000.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$2,775,097.00

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The City of Hermosa Beach will be responsible for completing the appropriate notice to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and will obtain all necessary permits.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$324,270.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$324,270.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *7. Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, Expansion 4, \$346,000.00
American Ranch Unit, San Luis Obispo County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 640+ acres of land for the purposes of protecting several sensitive plant and animal species and to establish a significant wildlife linkage between the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve and the Carrizo Plain National Monument, in eastern San Luis Obispo County.

The Carrizo Plain is located about 150 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles and lies midway between Santa Maria and Bakersfield in a valley separating the Coast and Temblor mountain ranges. The property (American Ranch Unit) is situated in the upper northwest corner of the Carrizo Plain National Monument and is adjacent to the existing Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve. Soda Lake Road is to the northeast and Hwy 166 is south of the property.

In 1985 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the DFG signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Carrizo Plain Natural Area (CPNA). Representatives of 16 public and private agencies formed a steering committee to develop the concept and objectives of the CPNA, and to secure the necessary funds to purchase and manage the land. Committee representation included San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties, the ranching industry, oil, gas and mining industries, federal and state governments and environmental

groups. The area's first purchase, 82,000 acres, was by The Nature Conservancy

(TNC) in 1988. Subsequently, TNC sold a majority of the acreage to BLM. This was followed by three additional purchases by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) beginning in late 1988. The overall designated area of the CPNA is 253,628± acres; 200,000± acres of BLM land, 6,300± acres of TNC land, 8,500± acres of DFG land and about 42,000± acres of land held by private owners.

The CPNA is the largest remaining tract of the San Joaquin Valley biogeographic province with limited human alteration containing a diverse complex of habitats with very limited distribution. It includes the largest remaining contiguous habitats for many endangered threatened and rare species such as the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, giant kangaroo rat and the San Joaquin antelope squirrel, supporting some of the healthiest populations of these species. The CPNA also provides habitat for many State or federally listed plant species including the California jewelflower, Hoover's wooly-star and San Joaquin wooly-threads. In addition, the CPNA contains habitat for California condors as well as pronghorn antelope, mule deer, tule elk, sandhill cranes and mountain plovers.

The DFG would manage the property to protect the natural habitats that contribute to and help sustain overall ecosystem health on the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve. Public access, which may include hunting programs, would be encouraged. In addition, this area allows for tremendous interpretive and educational opportunities, not only because of the incredible natural and cultural values associated with it, but also due to its close proximity to the Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo metropolitan areas, as well as the relatively close Los Angeles and San Francisco urban areas. As a replica of what the San Joaquin Valley was like before widespread settlement, the CPNA has been the focus of education programming in the United States, Europe and South American.

The approved appraised value is \$336,000.00 and the property owner has agreed to sell the property for that amount. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for appraisal, title insurance, escrow and Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this purchase to \$346,000.00.

The project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership of an interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; allocate \$346,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (b/c) for this purchase and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; allocate \$346,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (b/c) for this purchase and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *8. Lokern Ecological Reserve, Expansion 22, Kern County \$26,000.00

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 79± acres of privately-owned land as an expansion of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Lokern Ecological Reserve, located approximately 30 miles west of Bakersfield near the town of Buttonwillow, for the protection of numerous rare natural communities and threatened and endangered species. This proposed purchase is a small part of a larger program involving a number of public and private entities to protect rare natural communities in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

The subject property is located within the Lokern Natural Area (LNA), a 40,000± acre area designated for protection through a cooperative effort among the City of Bakersfield, Kern County, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Energy Commission, Bureau of Land Management, DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The LNA is bounded by the community of Buttonwillow to the east, the Temblor Mountains to the west, and extending in a narrow, irregular pattern approximately 20 miles in a north-south direction. It is crossed by several roadways, including Highway 33, Highway 58 and Lokern Road.

The primary purpose of this acquisition in the proposed 40,000-acre LNA is to protect rare natural communities and the threatened and endangered plant and animal species that are found in this area. In 1992, a report was completed by the San Joaquin Valley Biological Technical Committee (composed of various agency representatives) entitled, "A Biological Framework for Natural Lands and Endangered Species in the Southern San Joaquin Valley," which described the value of preserving lands in this area. In developing this document, the participants proposed a strategy of core reserves of existing habitat with connecting corridors throughout the San Joaquin Valley which would form a regional conservation program to ensure that sensitive natural communities and listed species would survive over time. The Lokern area was identified as one of the primary reserve areas for this purpose. This part of the valley has one of the highest concentrations of listed species in the continental United States. It is estimated that only five to ten percent of the land base on the valley floor remains in the natural vegetative communities endemic to the area.

The Lokern area of western Kern County contains some of the highest quality natural habitats left in the entire valley. The primary sensitive species found in this area include the San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, blunt-nose leopard lizard, kern mallow, Hoover's woolly star and alkali larkspur. These species are all known to exist in the LNA. This area is also of significant interest to local government, specifically the City of Bakersfield and Kern County, both of which were involved in the preparation of large regional habitat conservation plans. These plans include measures to provide offsite compensation for the loss of endangered species habitat due to development. Both plans include the LNA as a primary preserve area in which 90 to 95 percent of the existing habitat would be protected in perpetuity.

Most of the lands in the Lokern area are still natural vegetation communities, having never been cultivated. Some areas have been farmed to row crops, some of which are now being allowed to revert to their natural condition. Portions of the area have been developed for oil and natural gas production purposes. Basically, the LNA is relatively undisturbed in character. Threats to the area include future development potential as well as overgrazing by sheep and haphazard use by off-road vehicles, all of which could adversely affect this fragile habitat.

The subject property is located adjacent to Highway 58, in the southwesterly area of the LNA. It is generally level and is within a designated flood zone. As is typical of many properties in the area, this property has no legal access to a county-maintained road. It has been identified by the DFG as being very important to the overall, long-term program of creating a viable reserve in this area.

The Department of General Services (DGS) has approved the fair market value of the subject property at \$25,000.00 and the landowner has agreed to sell to the State for that amount. It is estimated that an additional \$1,000.00 will be needed for project costs, including title and DGS's administrative expenses, bringing the total allocation to \$26,000.00.

This project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of an interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Staff recommended that the Board approve acquisition of this project as proposed; allocate \$26,000.00 from the Department of Water Resources Mitigation Funds for this purchase; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve acquisition of this project as proposed; allocate \$26,000.00 from the Department of Water Resources Mitigation Funds for this purchase; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *9. San Joaquin River Parkway, Habitat Restoration and Public Access Plan, Jensen River Ranch, Fresno County \$440,135.00

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to complete final construction working drawings and specifications, secure environmental and regulatory compliance, and prepare cost estimate alternatives for the San Joaquin River Conservancy's (SJRC) Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Public Access project to be located in the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) approximately one-half mile upstream of the Highway 41 Bridge in Fresno County.

The Parkway is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres within a twenty-two mile long stretch between Friant Dam and State Route 99 on the San Joaquin River. The San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities. The SJRC's mission includes both public access and habitat restoration within the San Joaquin River Parkway. Other similar projects that have been completed or are underway within the Parkway include the Wildwood Native Park and Camp Pashayan habitat restoration and public access projects.

The Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) 2000-01 budget contains monies from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond (Proposition 12), with control language directing that these funds be used for SJRC programs. The SJRC, at its September 19, 2002, Board meeting, approved a request asking the WCB to allocate funds for the proposed project.

The SJRC's 167-acre Jensen River Ranch is predominantly irrigated pasture with a narrow belt of riparian woodland along a 0.5 mile river frontage and unimproved public access to the San Joaquin River along an unpaved farm road. The Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Public Access project will restore riparian and wetland habitat and construct hiking and equestrian trails, and a public use area with restrooms, picnic tables, a drinking fountain and shade shelters on the site. Planning for this project has proceeded in phases with the current proposal being Phase

Three. This phase will finalize construction working drawings and specifications, secure environmental and regulatory compliance, and prepare cost estimate alternatives for the project. The preceding two project phases involved finalizing the environmental document and completing the preliminary project design.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed by staff are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost:
Project Plan Review (Phases I and II)	\$15,000.00
Refine Conceptual Design	15,000.00
Regulatory Compliance Work Plan	10,000.00
Engineer's Estimate	10,000.00
Project Goals and Objectives	20,000.00
Regulatory Compliance, Approvals and Permits	110,000.00
Final Working Drawings and Specifications	240,000.00
Coordinate with Involved Agencies and Stakeholders	20,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$440,000.00

A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been adopted by the SJRC for the Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Public Access Plan.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy as proposed; allocate \$440,135.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355 for project costs and General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy as proposed; allocate \$440,135.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355 for project costs and General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *10. San Joaquin River Parkway, MacMichael Trail, Fresno County \$31,180.00

This project was to consider an allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) for a cooperative project to construct a public access loop trail on SJRC's Jensen River Ranch between Woodward Park and the San Joaquin River approximately one-half mile upstream of the Highway 41 Bridge in Fresno County.

The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres within a twenty-two mile long stretch between Friant Dam and State Route 99 on the San Joaquin River. The San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities. Part of the SJRC's mission is to provide public access to the San Joaquin River Parkway. To date, several public access projects have been completed or are under construction within the Parkway including the Wildwood Native Park, the Lewis S. Eaton Trail and Camp Pashayan.

The Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) 2000-01 budget contains monies from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond (Proposition 12) with control language directing that these funds be used for SRJC programs. The SJRC, at its February 20, 2003, Board meeting, approved a request asking WCB to allocate funds for the proposed trail project.

The MacMichael Trail will be the first phase and the primary access feature of the Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Public Access project. This 1.4 mile loop trail will connect the Lewis S. Eaton Trail at Woodward Park with the San Joaquin River and eventually provide public access to restored wetland and riparian habitat and other public access features planned for the 167 acres of former grazing land known as the Jensen River Ranch. The trail will be a ten foot wide, natural surface, graded trail with appropriate drainage, fencing, vehicle restricting bollards and signs. The unpaved farm road between the Lewis S. Eaton Trail and an old pole barn on the site will be hydroseeded. In addition, the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) will contribute funds for a vault restroom, drinking fountain and the demolition of the old barn.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed by staff, are as follows:

Description of Work:	WCB/SJRC	Trust	Estimated Total
Mobilization and Water Quality Protection	\$13,600.00		\$13,600.00
Traffic Control	3,000.00		3,000.00
Clearing and Grubbing	6,000.00		6,000.00
Rough Grade and Compact Trail	44,130.00		44,130.00
Import Borrow	1,760.00		1,760.00
Pasture Fencing	15,000.00		15,000.00
Main Trail	5,400.00		5,400.00
Barn Demolition		10,000.00	10,000.00
Asphalt Paving	10,125.00		10,125.00
Bollards and Entrance Signs	2,000.00		2,000.00
Hydroseed Old Trail	5,600.00		5,600.00
Signage		5,000.00	5,000.00
Drinking Fountain and Water Line		10,000.00	10,000.00
Vault Restroom and Raised Pad		25,000.00	25,000.00
Site Amenities	10,661.00		10,661.00
Project Management and Engineering	11,727.00	10,000.00	21,727.00
Inspection	11,727.00		11,727.00
Contract Administration	1,000.00		1,000.00
Contingencies	14,170.00		14,170.00
PROJECT TOTAL	\$155,900.00	\$60,000.00	\$215,900.00
Proposed Funding Breakdown:			
Wildlife Conservation Board		\$31,180.00	
SJRC (Recreation Trails Program Grant)		124,720.00	
San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust		60,000.00	
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:		\$215,900.00	

A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been adopted by SJRC for the Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement and Public Access Plan which includes the MacMichael Trail project.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy as proposed; allocate \$31,180.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy as proposed; allocate \$31,180.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *11. Wetland Habitat Restoration, Volta Wildlife Area, \$67,000.00
Merced County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) for a partnership project to provide reliable surface water to enhance approximately 2,930 acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands on and adjacent to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Volta Wildlife Area. The partners in this proposal include DU, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The wildlife area is located five miles east of the community of Santa Nella in Merced County.

The Volta Wildlife Area is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and managed by the DFG. Water is supplied to the wildlife area through the Volta Wasteway and water levels are controlled through radial gates located on the wildlife area. The gates are in critical need of rehabilitation. If they were to fail, all the wetlands on the wildlife area and hundreds of acres in the surrounding private lands could no longer be managed for optimal waterfowl production. In addition, four wetland cells on the area are hydraulically linked and cannot be managed independently. As a result, the DFG is unable to control undesirable vegetation, with the resultant loss of biological diversity.

To maintain reliable surface water to the wildlife area, the radial gates in the Volta Wasteway will be rehabilitated. In addition, a water supply canal and five water control structures will be constructed to provide water independently to each of the four wetland cells.

The wildlife area is made up of wetlands and uplands, and provides habitat for more than 150 species of bird, more than 20 species of mammals and 25 species of reptiles and amphibians. Thousands of waterfowl use the wildlife area in winter, including mallards and American widgeon, and shorebirds and other waterbirds are common. The wildlife area is one of the few sites in the grasslands that consistently support the giant garter snake, a State and federally listed threatened species. This species was observed in 1999 and 2000 on one of the four wetland cells that will be enhanced with this project. This project will help the DFG to maintain this critical

habitat.

Cost estimates for this project have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Earthwork	\$35,818.00
Water control structures	10,723.00
Radial gate rehabilitation	12,650.00
Grantee project design and management	13,200.00
Contingencies	7,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$79,391.00
Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$67,000.00
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	12,391.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$79,391.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$67,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (d) IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$67,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (d) IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*12. Wetland Habitat Restoration, Los Banos Wildlife Area, \$110,000.00
Mud Slough Unit, Merced County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (DU) for a partnership project to enhance approximately 475 acres of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Los Banos Wildlife Area, Mud Slough Unit. The partners in this proposal include DU, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The Mud Slough Unit of the Los Banos Wildlife Area is located five miles east of the City of Los Banos on the north side of Highway 152.

The Mud Slough Unit was acquired by the Board on two separate actions in November 1994 and May 1995 and totals approximately 653 acres. Most of the area has been restored, with swales and loafing islands found in most wetland cells where leveled fields once existed. Unfortunately, the unit still relies on the original water delivery system, which is inefficient and worn out.

To supply the unit with reliable surface water, a low lift pump that lifts water from Mud Slough onto the recently restored wetlands will be rehabilitated. Approximately 1,400 feet of 18 inch pipeline will be installed from that pump to three fields and to the Cox ditch, which supplies another five fields on the unit. All the water control structures on the Cox ditch will be replaced to more efficiently deliver water to all of the fields. Finally, 3,000 feet of levee will be rehabilitated to maintain water in Field 4A. These improvements will enhance approximately 475 acres of seasonal wetlands.

The Mud Slough Unit of the Los Banos Wildlife Area lies in the heart of a mile wide wetland corridor between the North and South Grasslands. As such, it provides habitat to a remarkable diversity of wildlife species. Wintering waterfowl by the thousands, including such species as pintails and northern shovelers, move north and south through this corridor. Western sandpipers, long-billed dowitchers and many other shorebird species rest and feed on the exposed mudflats of the seasonal wetlands. Less common species, such as white pelicans, tricolored blackbirds and white faced ibis regularly occur on the site. Located as it is, adjacent to Highway 152 and only minutes from Los Banos, the Unit is known to thousands of people for its diversity of wildlife.

Cost estimates for this project have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Site preparation and earthmoving	\$13,790.00
Water control structures	20,300.00
Pump repair and discharge pipe	54,300.00
Pipeline installation	19,650.00
Grantee project design and management	21,680.00
Contingencies	10,804.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$140,524.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$110,000.00
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	30,524.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$140,524.00

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$110,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (d) IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$110,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (d) IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *13. Cosumnes River, Dry Creek Vernal Pools, San Joaquin County \$1,460,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to The Nature Conservancy for the acquisition of a conservation easement over 2,866± acres of privately-owned land for the protection of vernal pools in northeast San Joaquin County.

The subject property is located in the southeast quadrant of the Cosumnes River Preserve, an area consisting of 50,000± acres. To date, 20,000 acres within this area have been protected with conservation easements. Located in the northeast quadrant of San Joaquin County on the north side of Highway 88, the ranch is approximately two air miles northwest of Camanche Reservoir and one mile south of the Sacramento County Line. Improved with three windmills, a set of corrals, stock ponds and perimeter/cross fencing, the property is, and has historically been, used for livestock grazing. The Department of Fish and Game has been active in the region since 1999 when it acquired a conservation easement on the Howard Ranch, a 12,000± acre cattle ranch rich in vernal pools and blue oak woodlands.

This area, within the watersheds of the Cosumnes River and Dry Creek, is home to some of the highest quality complexes of vernal pools remaining in the State. The vernal pools and swales are geologically diverse and host numerous rare plants and animals, many of which are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered. Pools of this region support many species of endemic invertebrates, including fairy shrimp, tadpole shrimp and are host to the rare California tiger salamander. These pools serve as important staging grounds for migratory waterfowl, offering abundant winter water feeding grounds. Tricolored blackbirds and burrowing owls are also known from this area. This region provides important winter forage for numerous hawks, including ferruginous, rough-legged, Swainson's (summer visitor), red-tailed hawks and northern harriers. Other habitats in this region include blue oak woodlands and savannas and riparian corridors which represent a good biological diversity of the Sierra foothills.

The region is primarily held in large cattle ranches (500-10,000± acres), the management practices of which generally maintain the existing diversity. However, recent land use trends in the region threaten the long-term viability of the vernal pools and woodlands. Vineyards are increasingly being planted in this area. As part of the preparation for planting, a deep-rip process that destroys the soil structure required for vernal pools is required.

In order to protect existing cattle ranches from conversion to uses incompatible with wildlife, conservation easements that restrict subdivision, development or plowing, and effectively restrict land use in perpetuity to grazing and other uses consistent with wildlife habitat protection, are encouraged. Acquiring a conservation easement on this property would protect an ecologically significant portion of the high quality vernal pools, blue oak woodlands and savannas of the Cosumnes and Dry Creek watersheds.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

The property owner has agreed to sell a conservation easement to TNC at the appraised value of \$3,000,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services. The Board's proposed grant to TNC would contribute \$1,460,000.00 toward the purchase, with the remaining funds secured by TNC through other funding partners.

Staff recommended that the Board approve a grant to The Nature Conservancy for the acquisition of a Conservation Easement as proposed; allocate \$1,460,000.00 from the Cosumnes River, River Protection Sub-Account (Prop. 13); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and

authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve a grant to The Nature Conservancy for the acquisition of a Conservation Easement as proposed; allocate \$1,460,000.00 from the Cosumnes River, River Protection Sub-Account (Prop. 13); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *14. Hogback Island Fishing Access, Sacramento County \$135.00

This was a proposal to consider a cooperative project with the County of Sacramento (County) to operate and maintain a boat ramp, parking area and access road at the State of California's Hogback Island Fishing Access located on the east bank of Steamboat Slough approximately two miles north of the City of Isleton in Sacramento County.

Hogback Island Fishing Access was constructed in 1967 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State Reclamation Board and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) as part of a larger levee project to provide public recreational opportunities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, primarily boat launching and fishing. The project improvements consisted of a boat ramp, parking area, access road, portable toilets, and water supply (well and pump). In 1982 and 1983 the WCB funded further improvements to the existing water system.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta provides a host of sport fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities attracting people from all over the region. The most popular sport-fisheries here are for salmon, trout, striped bass, catfish and sturgeon. In general, public fishing access and associated facilities are scarce on the Delta and keeping existing facilities open and serviceable is important to the public. The Hogback Island Fishing Access provided the public with 23,600 visitor days in 2002 as estimated by the County.

The Hogback Island facility has been operated and maintained by the County through Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) since 1968. The DFG has management responsibilities for public access at the site through agreement with the State Reclamation Board. The Reclamation Board has a public agency permit for the sovereign lands in the area from the State Lands Commission.

The current proposal is to enter into a twenty-five year Operating Agreement with the County of Sacramento, allowing them to continue operating and maintaining the Hogback Island Fishing Access as they have done for the past thirty-five years. No improvements to the existing facilities are currently planned.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$135.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund for Department of General Services' review costs; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$135.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund for Department of General Services' review costs; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *15. Black Forest, Lake County \$240,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the Lake County Land Trust to assist and complete the acquisition of 247± acres of vacant land as a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the protection and enhancement of "old growth" conifer forest and a small amount of oak woodlands habitat on the north slope of Mt. Konocti on Clear Lake in Lake County.

The project area is located on Soda Bay Road, 20 miles westerly of Lower Lake, and about 10 miles easterly of Lakeport near the shore of Clear Lake. Mt. Konocti is located on the west side of Clear Lake and is the most prominent geological feature in the area. Clear Lake State Park is located on Soda Bay Road about five miles west of the subject property. Public ownership of this area is critical to slow the development and encroachment of private homes that have been built on each side of the subject property. Development has been sporadic, but steady in the immediate area along and near Soda Bay Road.

The DFG has identified the Black Forest as being critical to the protection of the existing conifer forest, oak woodlands and rocky outcroppings and has recommended a grant to the Lake County Land Trust. The acreage will be incorporated into, and managed by the BLM with continued involvement by the Land Trust. The BLM currently owns approximately 580± acres west of the subject property and includes the rocky palisades of Buckingham Bluffs near the summit of Mt. Konocti. It is anticipated that the Land Trust will transfer the property to the BLM sometime in the near future. The area offers passive recreational uses as the habitat is maintained and developed in conjunction with surrounding publicly-owned lands. In addition, the old growth forest offers excellent erosion control as well as a tremendous "view shed" from nearly all areas surrounding Clear Lake. The property is currently vacant and undeveloped.

Preservation of the property identified within the forest hillside will ensure the continuing success of the conifer forest and provide habitat for numerous mammals and birds. Foresters have estimated the age of some of the Douglas fir trees to be in excess of 100 years old. A number of bear and mountain lion sightings have been reported by hikers as well as the surrounding homeowners. The property also provides habitat for many other species including deer, fox, bobcat, gray squirrel, coyote, raccoon, skunk and voles. A one-day bird survey was conducted by Redbud Audubon Society in July 2000 and noted over 25 species of birds including, osprey, flycatchers, red shouldered hawk, brown creeper, wrenit, oak titmouse and red breasted nuthatches. The property also has nine archeological sites that include Indian hunting camps, obsidian tool manufacturing sites and burial grounds on the slopes of Mt Konocti.

Lake County Land Trust acquired the property in 2002, when the window of opportunity for purchase was available. The owners at that time had filed a timber harvest plan to log the "old growth" timber. A large local effort was made to acquire the land and the Land Trust was able to secure the land by assuming existing debt and creating deeds of trust until State and federal funding could assist in the acquisition.

The Lake County Land Trust has offered to transfer the property to the BLM, provided it can clear the property of all debt. An appraisal of the property, approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), supports a fair market value of \$515,000.00, the amount of the deeds of trust. The Board's proposed grant in the amount of \$230,000.00, together with funding from the BLM in the amount of \$285,000.00, will release the deeds. An additional allocation of \$10,000.00 is needed for escrow and title fees, together with DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation to \$240,000.00.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of interests in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$240,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (a) for the grant and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$240,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (a) for the grant and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department

of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned. Motion carried.

- *16. Mattole River Ecological Reserve, Expansions 11 – 14, \$866,000.00
Mendocino and Humboldt Counties

This proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to Sanctuary Forest (SF), a local non-profit organization and longtime cooperating “partner” with the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to assist in the acquisition of four separate ownerships totaling 450± acres for the preservation of old-growth redwood, mixed coniferous forest and Mattole River watershed land. Three of the properties are located in northwestern Mendocino County and the remaining is in southwestern Humboldt County.

Since 1988, the Board has approved acquisitions totaling 1,322± acres in the Mattole River watershed region. The lands generally described for acquisition at this time contain large stands of old-growth redwood and Douglas fir, as well as various hardwoods, providing ideal habitat for numerous old-growth dependent animal and plant species. These forests, located near the headwaters of the Mattole River, contain the best King salmon spawning gravels in the entire watershed and provide nesting habitat for the unique marbled murrelet, the spotted owl, osprey, goshawk and many other bird species. The numerous cool, clean creeks flowing from the forest support many aquatic species, including the Olympic salamander and tailed frog. In past years, logging practices all around the subject areas have made this particular forest the last genetic reservoir of many threatened and endangered species found in the Upper Mattole River watershed. An important use of the area could be for the reintroduction of species needing such an old-growth habitat for their survival.

Habitat for more common mammal species such as deer, fox, raccoon, bear, skunk, porcupine, squirrel and mountain lion is abundant throughout the subject properties and the existing reserve area. The undisturbed ecosystem in the forest is an excellent educational laboratory, not only for trained scientists, but for students as well. It clearly shows the interdependence of rare plant and animal species.

Following is a brief description of the four unimproved parcels of land being recommended for purchase at this time, together with the costs associated with each purchase.

Expansion 11 \$203,000.00

This 20± acre parcel is situated along the historic Mattole Road, in the heart of the Upper Mattole River and forest cooperative reserve. Bedrock pools and fine gravels in the main stem of the Mattole River provide important spawning and rearing habitat for endangered salmon along one-fourth mile of the Mattole River frontage. The landowner is retaining a life estate as well as a camping license for her granddaughter on the property. The owner has agreed to sell at the Department of General Services’ (DGS) approved fair market value of \$198,000.00. Additional administrative costs are estimated to be \$5,000.00, bringing the total allocation necessary for this purchase to

\$203,000.00.

Expansion 12

\$60,000.00

This 190± acre parcel lies west of the Mattole River in southwestern Humboldt County. Anderson Creek flows through the property and is a Coho salmon spawning tributary to the wild Mattole River. This watershed protection project creates a solid building block on the road to survival of this magnificent species threatened with extinction. The owner has agreed to sell for the appraised, approved fair market value of \$405,000.00. SF applied for and received a grant from DFG in the amount of \$350,000.00 to assist with the acquisition of this property. Additional administrative costs are estimated to be \$5,000.00, bringing the total allocation necessary for this purchase to \$60,000.00.

Expansion 13

\$405,000.00

This 240± acre parcel lies west of the Mattole River, adjoining State Park land to the north and Save the Redwoods League land to the south. This is the key wildlife corridor connecting the majestic old growth tress of Goshawk Grove and Lost River Forest. The addition of this parcel to the cooperative management area provides resource protections to the entire watershed of the south fork of Lost Man Creek. The resulting riparian corridor will benefit this plentiful steelhead stream and assist other migrating wildlife, reseeding tomorrow's old growth forest. The owner has agreed to sell for the appraised, approved fair market value of \$400,000.00. Additional administrative costs are estimated to be \$5,000.00, bringing the total allocation necessary for the purchase to \$405,000.00.

Expansion 14

\$198,000.00

This 20± acre parcel is situated along the historic Mattole Road, in the heart of the Upper Mattole River and forest cooperative reserve. Bedrock pools and fine gravels in the main stem of the Mattole River provide important spawning and rearing habitat for endangered salmon along one-fourth mile of the Mattole River frontage. This project will also maintain the tranquility of the scenic roadway and form a wildlife corridor connecting the public Big Red parcels to the north and Dream Stream parcel to the south. The owner has agreed to sell for the appraised, approved fair market value of \$193,000.00. Additional administrative costs are estimated to be \$5,000.00, bringing the total allocation necessary for the purchase to \$198,000.00.

The properties will be managed by the SF as part of the existing ecological reserve. Long-term management strategies for all of the properties previously acquired are being developed cooperatively among numerous interest public agencies, private landowners and non-profits who own property within the watershed. Among these are the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Fish and Game, Save the Redwoods League, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the SF. SF has secured exclusive purchase options on all of the properties and will hold title upon completion of the transactions.

The acquisitions are exempt from CEQA under Section 15313 Class 13 as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of interests in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended the Board approve these grants as proposed; allocate \$866,000.00 to cover the grants and related costs from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve these grants as proposed; allocate \$866,000.00 to cover the grants and related costs from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *17. Sacramento River Conservation Area (Gaines), Expansion 7, \$243,000.00
Glenn County

This proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the Sacramento River Partners (SRP) to acquire 36± acres of privately-owned land for protection and enhancement of riparian and aquatic habitat. The subject property is located on the west bank of the Sacramento River, at the State Highway 162 bridge crossing, just south of Butte City, in Glenn County.

The property is surrounded on three sides by over 1,000 acres of property owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Located north and on the opposite side of the river is the Butte City boat ramp facility managed by the County of Glenn.

The property is improved with a 28± acre walnut orchard and 8± acres of riparian and riverine habitat. On the southern tip of the property there is a small slough area containing riverine habitat. There are no improvements on the property. Access is provided via an unpaved driveway that parallels the north side of Highway 162 and running through USFWS property.

Riparian and riverine habitats in this reach of the Sacramento River provide important seasonal habitat for migratory birds, waterfowl, native amphibians and

salmonids. This includes a number of State and federally listed special status species, such as the western yellow-billed cuckoo, giant garter snake, greater sandhill crane, bank swallow, western pond turtle, Swainson's hawk, central valley steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is currently working on a project to construct a series of rock groins on the north and south portions of subject property to reduce erosion that is compromising the integrity of their bridge structure.

To begin construction, Caltrans needs to acquire approximately 1.38± acres in fee, 2.15± acres for a temporary construction easement and a 1.39± acre mitigation easement, for a total of 4.92 acres. The SRP have agreed to cooperate with Caltrans in providing them with the necessary right of way.

Under the terms of the grant agreement the acquisition proceeds received from Caltrans will be reimbursed to the Wildlife Conservation Board. Caltrans has not yet developed final estimates for their acquisition. One benefit of the Caltrans project will be to provide upgraded access as a result of bringing construction equipment onto the property. Also, to complete construction, Caltrans will need to remove significant portions of the orchard. Under the current ownership this removal could seriously impair the viability of the orchard, however, for SRP the removal is consistent with the intended use and future management of the property.

Another use and benefit of the proposed acquisition is the potential for public access.

The lack of adequate public access to the Sacramento River is recognized as a major public land use issue in the region and one of the reasons this acquisition has been endorsed by the Glenn County Board of Supervisors. The adjoining highway provides excellent vehicular access to the property. The SRP have a proven track record for developing public access on their properties, and intend, in cooperation with the USFWS, to do so as part of this acquisition.

In addition to public access, the County of Glenn is very interested in developing a boat ramp on the subject property some time in the future. Located across from the subject property just north of the State Highway Bridge is the Butte City boat ramp. This ramp is connected to the Sacramento River by a narrow channel. Due to ramp design and hydraulics of the river at this location, the channel is constantly filling in with river sediment. The county is very interested in seeing a new ramp developed to replace the existing ramp and design. There are approximately 40 miles between boat ramps along this stretch of the river when the Butte City ramp is out of service. Although no design or hydraulic studies have been made to determine if the subject property is suitable for a boat ramp, in terms of public access, visibility for security reasons, and lack of other boat ramps in the area, the property does have good potential for this use.

The proposed expansion falls under the purview of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF). The SRCAF involves both private and public landowners along the Sacramento River, including representatives from seven

counties and State and federal resource agencies. The project has been presented

twice to the SRCA Forum, Technical Advisory Committee, once in February and once in April, for review and comment. At the April meeting Caltrans was in attendance to answer questions regarding their proposed project. No objections were raised toward the proposed acquisition.

The SRP have an option to acquire the property based on its fair market value of \$240,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). In addition to the grant amount, an additional \$3,000.00 is estimated to be needed for DGS and other administrative costs, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$243,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff review and approve all documents pertaining to the Grantee's acquisition, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase or sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended the Board approve the grant to Sacramento River Partners as proposed; allocate \$243,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (e/f) to be applied toward the purchase price and related costs; authorize acceptance of reimbursements related to Caltrans' planned acquisition of portions of the subject property; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the grant to Sacramento River Partners as proposed; allocate \$243,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (e/f) to be applied toward the purchase price and related costs; authorize acceptance of reimbursements related to Caltrans' planned acquisition of portions of the subject property; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *18. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Sacramento River, \$428,000.00
Del Rio Site, Glenn County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Sacramento River Partners (SRP) for a cooperative project to restore approximately 96 acres of riparian habitat on their property located approximately one-half mile east of the Sacramento River and approximately three miles north of Butte City in Glenn County. The partners in this proposal include the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board), SRP, Great Valley Center and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The project site is part of a 258+ acre property that was acquired by SRP in 2002 with a grant provided by the Board. The property had been developed for walnut and almond orchard production by the previous owners. While the almond orchard has been removed, the walnut orchard is still producing, and will be managed by SRP until its natural production begins to decline. The proposed project site is in a natural overflow drainage area formerly occupied by an almond orchard that was not producing adequately. Due to frequent flooding from the Sacramento River, SRP has removed the almond orchard and the site is ready for restoration. SRP has also developed a draft public use plan for the property, which is being discussed at public meetings in the local area. The plan includes provisions for educational field trips by schools, scouting groups and other organized groups.

The proposed project will include cultivation, planting of riparian tree species, irrigation, weed management, protection of planted trees from herbivores (deer, rabbits, voles, etc.), planting of native grasses and other native understory vegetation, and monitoring of the planted area to determine success and for adaptive management, which may include some replanting and adjustment of protection activities.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed by staff, are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Planning and Permitting	\$34,472.00
Site Preparation	50,146.00
Irrigation	12,673.00
Planting Activities	155,394.00
Project Maintenance	73,583.00
Project Monitoring	17,623.00
Project Management	31,974.00
Contingencies	25,639.00
Project Sign	1,000.00
Project Administration	58,962.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$461,466.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$428,000.00
Great Valley Center	8,500.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	24,966.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$461,466.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$428,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(2); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$428,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(2); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *19. Wetland Habitat Restoration (Little Dry Creek Farms), \$83,000.00
Butte County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a partnership project to restore 465 acres of seasonal wetlands, 80 acres of upland grasslands and 40 acres of riparian habitat on privately-owned land in Butte County. The partners in this proposal include the CWA, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the landowner, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The project is located six miles east of Butte City on Afton Road, immediately adjacent to the Department's Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area.

The site was recently enrolled in the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program and protected with a perpetual federal easement. This voluntary program offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. The NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. Typically, these lands are marginal farmlands that regularly flood. The Board and NRCS have a long and cooperative history together, protecting and restoring wetland habitat throughout the Central Valley and California. Little Dry Creek Farms is a prime example of this cooperation, with the NRCS providing funds for its protection and assisting the Board, the landowner and the other partners in the restoration efforts.

The property has been a rice farm for many years, but located as it is in the Butte Basin adjacent to Butte Creek, it often floods and is considered marginal farmland at best. This same flood regime, however, provides a unique opportunity to provide extremely valuable wetland and riparian habitat. Much of the Butte Basin is an ideal mix of restored wetlands and riparian habitat, interspersed with rice and other small grain crops, which provide tremendous wildlife benefits. This project, once restored, will add to that wildlife diversity. The Board's Inland Wetlands Program was established to help achieve the goals of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture (CVHJV), which calls for the protection and restoration of 34,000 acres within the Butte Basin. This project will add to the remarkable habitat that already exists within the Basin and will also work toward the CVHJV Butte Basin restoration goal.

The project calls for the restoration of wetlands through the construction of a system of levees and water control structures that will allow the landowner to precisely manage water levels on the property to maximize wetland habitat values. Swales will be cut through previously laser-leveled fields to increase wetland diversity, tules will be planted and more than 10,000 cottonwood and willow cuttings will be planted to restore 40 acres of riparian habitat. Approximately 80 acres of uplands will be planted, and twenty of those acres will be planted with native grasses.

These habitat improvements should provide for a broad range of wildlife species. The habitat has been designed to provide an ideal mix of seasonal wetlands, riparian habitat and uplands, which will support many species of waterfowl, including mallards, wood ducks and American widgeon. Shorebirds, such as greater yellowlegs and long-billed dowitchers, will benefit from the shallow water and mudflats created by the project. Riparian dependent species that will benefit from such a project include yellow warblers, black headed grosbeaks, and ringtailed cats. Finally, the uplands will provide nesting habitat for such species as northern harriers and meadowlarks.

Cost estimates for this project have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Conservation easement	\$1,170,000.00
Site preparation and earthmoving	371,000.00
Water control structures	66,000.00
Tule transplants	10,000.00
Upland seeding	28,000.00
Tree transplants	25,000.00
Contingencies	50,000.00
Survey, design and construction management	24,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$1,744,000.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$83,000.00
Natural Resources Conservation Service	1,218,700.00
Landowner	334,000.00
Fish and Wildlife Service	25,000.00
California Waterfowl Association	83,300.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$1,744,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Management Plan. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$83,000.00 from the Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$83,000.00 from the Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *20. Lassen Foothills Ecological Reserve, Expansions 2 and 3, \$1,163,000.00
Shasta and Tehama Counties

This proposal was to consider an allocation for two separate grants to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to assist in its purchase of conservation easements over 10,990± acres, for protecting wildlife corridors in Tehama and Shasta Counties, between Interstate 5 and the Lassen National Forest to the east.

The Board approved a grant to TNC during its meeting of November 2000, to complete the acquisition of a conservation easement over 9,577± acres of land under the Lassen Foothills conservation strategy. This area is managed as part of the Vina Plains Preserve. Expansion No. 1 was the allocation of a grant to TNC to assist in the purchase of a conservation easement over 990± acres of land located near Manton, which was approved at the May 2001 Board meeting.

The subject conservation easement project is part of a larger conservation strategy by TNC and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to link together public and private lands to create a landscape-scale reserve that will protect extensive wildlife corridors and prevent habitat fragmentation. The Lassen Foothills area in Shasta and Tehama Counties is strategically located within a larger 800,000-acre region of blue oak woodlands, riparian and aquatic habitat, vernal pools and grasslands that includes 290,000± acres for protected public lands and 55,000± acres of privately-owned lands.

The primary purpose of the proposed acquisitions is to protect blue oak woodland, vernal pool and grassland habitats which provides critical habitat for the east Tehama deer herd, mountain lion and other wildlife species. Sixteen rare, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals such as the Conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, tadpole shrimp, Sanford's arrowhead and slender orcutt grass are found in the area. The protection of riparian and aquatic habitats along five major tributaries of the Sacramento River is crucial to four native races of Chinook salmon and steelhead trout and to migratory birds. A fundamental goal of this proposal is to protect a regional system of public and private lands managed to preserve the long-term viability of multiple habitat types and sensitive species.

The specifics of the two proposed grants are as follows:

Burton Ranch, Expansion 2

This is a proposal for the allocation of a grant in the amount of \$180,000.00 to TNC for assisting in acquiring a conservation easement over 1,511± acres of land located adjacent to Battle Creek, in Shasta and Tehama Counties. The property has been appraised and the owners have agreed to sell a conservation easement to TNC at the Department of General Services' (DGS) approved, appraised value of

\$930,000.00. The southerly portion of the site is bisected by Battle Creek and the Coleman Canal extends along the northerly property boundary. The property is currently used as a cattle ranch, with additional income generated from leasing hunting and fishing rights. After the acquisition, the property owner will retain the right to use the property as a rural home site, for agricultural purposes and for recreation, but within limited parameters.

Leininger Ranch, Expansion 3

This is a proposal for the allocation of a grant in the amount of \$973,000.00 to TNC for assisting in acquiring a conservation easement over 9,479± acres of land located on the southerly side of Deer Creek, five miles east of Los Molinos in Tehama County. The property has been appraised and the owners have agreed to sell a conservation easement to TNC at the DGS' approved, appraised value of \$2,323,000.00. The property is used for seasonal livestock grazing and recreation. In addition, there is a contract for rock extraction. After the acquisition, the property owner will retain the right to use the property for cattle grazing and recreational uses, including fishing, hunting and most passive uses, but within limited parameters. Rock extraction will no longer be permitted.

The two purchases total \$3,253,000.00. The Board's proposed grants to TNC would contribute \$1,153,000.00 toward the purchases, with the remaining funds coming from other funding sources secured by TNC. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for DGS' review fees, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$1,163,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grants provide that the Board's staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into TNC's escrow account for the purchase of these property interests.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve these projects as proposed; allocate \$1,163,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12) Section 5096.350 (a)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve these projects as proposed; allocate \$1,163,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *21. Department of Fish and Game Land Management Plans \$753,540.00
Yolo, Sacramento, Monterey, Fresno, Madera, Kern,
Mono and Riverside Counties

This proposal was to consider four interagency agreements with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for the completion of seven land management plans for properties owned by the DFG located in Yolo, Sacramento, Monterey, Fresno, Madera, Kern, Mono, and Riverside counties. The Wildlife Conservation Board has, over the years, funded the acquisition of numerous properties on behalf of the DFG to protect and preserve habitats and to provide for compatible public recreational use. The DFG serves as steward of these properties and implements departmental policies relating to management and enhancement of wildlife and their habitats, as well as wildlife-related public recreational use, when appropriate. Due to the rapid rate of acquisitions over the last decade, in large part due to voter-approved bond initiatives, some of the properties acquired have been minimally managed and require the development of management plans. Management plans are developed to assess resources, involve the public and provide guidance to the DFG's land management program. The need to develop management plans was recognized in the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protections Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), that provides a portion of the funds made available to the Board may be used to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the Board. In November 2002, the Board approved funding for the first group of management plan proposals in the South Coast Region. The DFG has now identified a variety of properties in four separate DFG regions, and is requesting funds to develop management plans as follows:

Sacramento Valley-Central Sierra Region \$320,000.00

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Yolo County (\$200,000.00)

The 15,924-acre Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is located two miles east of Davis at the northernmost end of the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta. The wildlife area consists of seasonal and permanent wetlands, as well as agricultural fields and pasture. Nearly all of this acreage is south of Interstate 80 in the Yolo Bypass and is subject to seasonal inundation. The Yolo Bypass is the most important component of the lower

Sacramento River Flood Control System. The wildlife area is centered on the

terminus of Putah Creek, an area known locally as the Putah Sinks. Running the length of the east side of the Yolo Bypass is a large tidal canal known as the east toe drain. These two waterways provide the entire water supply used for wetland management on the wildlife area. A substantial portion of the wildlife area was acquired in 1991 with the purchase of the 3,700 acre Putah Creek Sinks Unit. A management plan for that portion of the wildlife area was completed in April of 1992 by the DFG. Additionally, agreements regarding management of endangered species and departmental assumption of maintenance responsibilities were negotiated and signed with the assistance of the Yolo Basin Foundation. The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area was dedicated and opened to the public in 1997.

In December 2001, the Board approved funds to acquire additional lands in the area and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area grew to over 15,900 acres. When these properties were purchased, assurances were made to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors and the Delta Protection Commission that no land use changes would be made until a management plan was prepared utilizing an open process involving local stakeholders. The DFG is now requesting \$200,000.00 to prepare the management plan, with the help of local interests, for the entire wildlife area.

Lower Sherman Island Wildlife Area, Sacramento County (\$120,000.00)

This 3,115-acre Lower Sherman Island Wildlife Area is located north of the town of Antioch in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, Sacramento County. The wildlife area is adjacent to Upper Sherman, Donlan, West, Kimball and Winter Islands. The wildlife area is bordered by the Sacramento River on the north, Donlan and Upper Sherman Islands on the east and the San Joaquin River to the south and west. The purpose for acquiring the wildlife area was to provide waterfowl hunting opportunity, as well as fishing and recreational boating. Habitat on Lower Sherman Island consists of flooded tidal area, which is mostly open water with a small component of tidal marsh. An old dike system still forms a boundary to the area, upon which lie several old cabins and duck blinds. There are several large patches of tules as well as other aquatic vegetation. Dredge disposal from past years has created a small upland component along the northern and southern sides of the island now inhabited with cottonwoods, eucalyptus and shrubs. The wildlife area is home to many types of waterfowl, fish and other species. An initial 1988 management plan for the DFG's Delta Island Complex, including Lower Sherman Island, established goals for species and habitat management of California hibiscus, Mason's lilaeopsis, Suisan marsh aster, delta smelt and Sacramento splittail. The plan also included secondary goals for California black rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, heron rookeries and black-shouldered kite. An updated and revised management plan is required to focus on additional species issues, current land use issues and to address specific concerns including, but not limited to, a substantial change in public use, conflict with structures and leases, and the trespass and illegal activities that have occurred since 1988. The DFG is requesting \$120,000.00 to prepare the management plan for the area.

The scope of work for the Sacramento Valley-Central Sierra Region agreement will include delivery of draft approved land management plans for each of the above two properties. Plans are to be prepared per DFG guidelines and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary.

Central Coast Region

\$148,000.00

Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Monterey County (\$148,000.00)

The 1,509-acre Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve is located 4 miles inland from Moss Landing on Monterey Bay. One thousand four hundred (1,400) acres of the Ecological Reserve are designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR), one of 25 NERRs in the nation. DFG manages the reserve under a partnership agreement with NOAA and helps monitor the health of this reserve, in part to contribute to the understanding and management of estuaries throughout the United States.

The reserve harbors State and federally listed species including the California red-legged frog, Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, California brown pelican and southern sea otter. Active bird breeding rookeries include Caspian tern, great blue heron, great egret and double-crested Cormorant. Many raptor and passerine species breed on the reserve as well. The reserve consists of 789 acres of tidal wetland, 93 acres of open estuary, 12 acres of riparian woodland, 12 acres of freshwater ponds, 36 acres of eucalyptus, 150 acres of oak woodland and 399 acres of grassland.

More than 10,000 of the approximate 50,000 annual visitors to the reserve are students who participate in the research, education and public programs conducted on site by reserve staff and volunteers. In addition to the more than 100 individuals who volunteer their time and talent, more than 2,000 teachers have been trained as naturalists to lead their classes on reserve field trips. At any given time, over 30 research and monitoring projects are being conducted or coordinated by reserve staff. ESNERR facilities consist of a visitor center with award-winning exhibits, small teaching lab, outdoor amphitheater and picnic area, administration building, maintenance complex, portable office trailers, and over five miles of public hiking trails with boardwalks, viewing overlooks and a wildlife viewing blind. Due to years of human impacts to the estuary, from the railroad, dairies and farming activities to hunt clubs, a power plant and wrecking yards, both wetland and upland restoration needs in the estuary are great.

The management plan must meet the needs of and pass review by the DFG and NOAA. In addition, the Facilities Development Plan (a sub-set of the management plan) will require review by Monterey County and the Department of Finance. The scope of work for the Central Coast Region agreement will include delivery of a draft

approved land management plan for the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve. The plan is to be prepared per DFG guidelines and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The DFG is requesting \$148,000.00 to prepare the management plan for the area.

San Joaquin Valley-Southern Sierra Region

\$210,000.00

San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve,
Madera and Fresno Counties (\$160,000.00)

The 920-acre ecological reserve is located along the San Joaquin River downstream of Friant Dam along the Fresno and Madera County border. The Board has a long history of funding habitat acquisitions along the San Joaquin River, both for the DFG as well as for the San Joaquin River Conservancy, having completed the first acquisition for the DFG in 1988. The DFG's ecological reserve consists of several discontinuous mixed riparian woodland holdings along the San Joaquin River which are intertwined with the San Joaquin River Parkway parcels and private land holdings. The ecological reserve forms the most significant wildlife refugia for this reach of the river. In partnership with the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust and Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, city and county governments of Madera and Fresno, the long-term management goals of the DFG are to maintain wildlife in an urban setting while providing recreational and educational opportunities for the people of the State of California. The DFG is requesting \$160,000.00 to prepare the management plan for the area.

Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Kern County (\$50,000.00)

The 2,000-acre Canebrake Ecological Reserve is located approximately eight miles up stream of Lake Isabella in South Fork Valley along Canebrake Creek and the South Fork of the Kern River. The Board approved the funds to acquire the properties in 1992 and 2001. The reserve is adjacent to White Blanket Indian Reservation and Sequoia National Forest on the north and Sequoia National Forest on the south. To the west is a mixture of private and Audubon Society lands and to the east is a mixture of private and Bureau of Land Management lands. The original intent of this reserve was the protection of riparian woodland habitat necessary for southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo recovery, with almost three miles of the South Fork Kern River and about one mile of Canebrake Creek flowing through the property. The property also provides an access route to the variety of public lands that border the property. In 1998, the Board funded access improvements on a portion of the property consisting of trail improvements, a footbridge over Canebrake Creek and a parking area.

The scope of work for the San Joaquin Valley-Southern Sierra Region agreement will include delivery of draft approved land management plans for each of the two properties listed above. Plans are to be prepared per DFG guidelines and other

local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The DFG is requesting \$50,000.00 to prepare the management plan for the areas.

Eastern Sierra-Inland Desert Region

\$75,000.00

By Day Creek Ecological Reserve, Mono County (\$35,000.00)

The 460-acre By Day Creek Ecological Reserve is located near the Toiyabe National Forest, approximately five miles northwest of the town of Bridgeport. The properties were acquired in 1983 and 1990 to protect the Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), a federally listed threatened species. The LCT population may be one of few pure strain Walker River drainage populations existing today. The By Day Creek population may play an important role in facilitating the restoration of the species to its original range. In addition to Lahontan cutthroat trout, the property has multiple species values including habitat used by mule deer, mountain lion, coyote, bobcat, black bear, porcupine, blue grouse, mountain quail, golden eagle and numerous non-game birds and mammals. In 1985, the Board approved funding to complete channel stabilization work and some fish cover enhancement work in the stream. The ecological reserve is used by the public for hunting, birding and other wildlife dependent activities. Plans are to be prepared per DFG guidelines and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The DFG is requesting \$35,000.00 to prepare the management plan.

Peninsular Ranges, Riverside County (\$40,000.00)

The 2,386-acre Peninsular Ranges property is located in the southwestern portion of the Coachella Valley about thirty miles south of Palm Desert at the Riverside/San Diego County line. The Salton Sea and the community of desert shores are located about three miles to the east. The Board first funded property acquisitions in the Coachella Valley in 1982. The property has been acquired to help protect the peninsular bighorn sheep in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains through protection of 2,386 acres of alluvial fan at the mouth of Barton Canyon. In addition to the bighorn sheep, the property has multiple species values including habitat for desert tortoise, least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. Potential habitat exists for several sensitive bat species including the western yellow bat, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, pocketed free-tailed bat and western mastiff bat. It is expected that this property will be designated as an ecological reserve at some time in the near future.

The scope of work for the Eastern Sierra-Inland Desert Region agreement will include delivery of draft approved land management plans for each of the above listed properties. Plans are to be prepared per DFG guidelines and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The DFG is requesting \$40,000.00 to prepare the management plan for the area.

Cost estimates for these projects, which have been reviewed by staff, are as follows:

Sacramento Valley – Central Sierra Region:

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Yolo County	\$200,000.00
Lower Sherman Island Wildlife Area, Sacramento County	\$120,000.00

Central Coast Region:

Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Monterey County	\$148,000.00
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San Joaquin Valley – Southern Sierra Region:

San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve, Madera and Fresno Counties.	\$160,000.00
Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Kern County	\$50,000.00

Eastern Sierra – Inland Desert Region:

By Day Creek Ecological Reserve, Mono County	\$35,000.00
Peninsular Ranges, Riverside County	<u>\$40,000.00</u>

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$753,540.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG will complete all California Environmental Quality Act requirements and obtain all necessary permits related to the preparation of the management plans.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$753,540.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the end of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$753,540.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried

22. Ramona Grasslands, San Diego County \$1,406,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to assist in its acquisition of 420± acres of land, in the community of Ramona in San Diego County, and the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Assistance Grant, totaling \$660,000.00, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to be applied toward the acquisition. This acquisition will provide for the permanent protection of one of the last remnants of extensive grassland habitat in coastal Southern California. Mr. Steve Christensen briefly described the project and its location.

The property is located approximately 27 miles northeast of San Diego's business district, adjacent to the southern boundary of the Ramona Airport. The property is undeveloped, and is currently rented by a local rancher for cattle grazing.

The grasslands west of Ramona represent one of the last remnants of extensive grassland habitat with exceptionally high biological importance in coastal Southern California. Surrounding and embedded within these grasslands are a variety of rare habitat types, including vernal pools, Diegan coastal sage scrub, oak woodland and riparian forests, as well as chaparral covered hills to the north. These hills provide an essential, natural habitat buffer zone to the grasslands. This mosaic of grassland and associated habitats support numerous species of conservation concern, including the Stephens' kangaroo rat, San Diego fairy shrimp, spreading navarretia, arroyo southwestern toad, neotropical migrant songbirds and raptors.

A Management Advisory Committee comprised of County Parks and Recreation will be established to review the management plan for the wildlife reserve. Once this land is conserved, either the County of San Diego or a well established non-profit entity will be managing the land. In addition, the land will become part of the County of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program's reserve system. The site offers opportunities for public recreation, such as hiking, bird watching, interpretive programs and other outdoor activities.

The property owners have agreed to sell to TNC at the Department of General Services' (DGS) approved fair market value of \$3,000,000.00. The Board's proposed grant would contribute \$1,401,000.00 toward the cost of acquisition. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses including DGS' review fees, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$1,406,000.00. The USFWS has awarded an HCP Assistance Grant for this project, totaling \$660,000.00, which will be applied toward the purchase price. TNC proposes to contribute the remainder of \$939,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board's staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into TNC's escrow account for the purchase of this

property.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Mr. Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League.

Mr. Christensen reported that Ms. Theresa O'Rourke and Ms. Jennifer Johnson representing The Nature Conservancy were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of an HCP Assistance Grant totaling \$660,000.00 to cover a portion of the purchase price; allocate \$1,406,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of an HCP Assistance Grant totaling \$660,000.00 to cover a portion of the purchase price; allocate \$1,406,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

23. Iron Mountain Wildlife Area, Expansion 2 (Boulder Oaks), \$3,313,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the County of San Diego to assist in its purchase of a fee acquisition of 1,214± acres as part of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), located on the southeast slope of Iron Mountain near the City of Poway. Mr. Steve Christensen briefly described the project and its location.

This wildlife area is located near the communities of Ramona, Lakeside, Poway and the Barona Indian Reservation. The subject property is bounded by State Highway 67 on the west, Mussey Grade Road on the east, San Vicente Reservoir on the south and Dos Picos Park Road on the north.

The Wildlife Conservation Board originally approved an acquisition of 1,135± acres along with a donation of 240± acres, from the El Cajon Boys and Girls Club. This acquisition has helped to ensure the long-term protection of a wildlife corridor between the City of Poway's existing Iron Mountain Preserve and the open space surrounding San Vicente Reservoir. Expansion 1 was an allocation for a grant to the County of San Diego for the acquisition of 716± acres of sensitive habitats located within the eastern foothills of San Diego County.

Iron Mountain Wildlife Area is within San Diego's MSCP Sub-area Plan and is located between three rapidly developing areas, Poway, Lakeside and Ramona. This property is in mostly pristine natural condition, containing vernal pools, grasslands, riparian and oak woodlands, with a vigorous population of Englemann Oaks. Improvements consist of a ranch house, cabin and various out-buildings.

The wildlife area is comprised of two distinct portions along an east – west split which is delineated by the deep and heavily wooded valley of "West Branch," the major western tributary to San Vicente Reservoir. As a result of the property's sensitive habitat, pristine condition and high threat from development pressure, this acquisition is considered the highest priority within the wildlife area.

It is envisioned that the property will be owned and managed by the County of San Diego through the County Department of Parks and Recreation, with support from Iron Mountain Conservancy. Because of the many fragile resources and the close proximity to rapidly growing urban areas, only limited, passive public uses will be allowed.

The Grantors have agreed to sell at the Department of General Services' (DGS) approved fair market value of \$4,410,000.00. The Board will contribute \$3,307,500.00 toward the cost of acquisition with the County providing the balance of \$1,102,500.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,500.00 will be needed for DGS' review fees, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$3,315,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board's staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into TNC's escrow account for the purchase of this property.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Mr. Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Flores asked if this area was currently being utilized for hunting. Mr. Christensen explained there is no hunting on this property because of the nearby ranchettes.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,233,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12) Section 5096.350 (a)(6) and \$2,080,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Robert Hight moved that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,233,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12) Section 5096.350 (a)(6) and \$2,080,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

24. San Miguel Ranch, Expansion 1, San Diego County \$1,703,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to assist in the acquisition of 5.86 ± acres of land for the protection of rare and sensitive species and habitats. The property is located along Proctor Valley Road, south of the city of Chula Vista, in central San Diego County. Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

The subject property is located in an area proposed for annexation into the city of Chula Vista. This property is within the city of Chula Vista's proposed Multiple

Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a sub-area plan of the Sweetwater Reservoir/San Miguel Mountain/Sweetwater River Biological Core Area within the County of San Diego's MCSP. Other conservation holdings in the area include the

500± acre, USFWS, San Miguel Ranch Preserve, located approximately two miles to the northwest. The property was acquired by USFWS with the assistance of a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board at its May 1997 meeting. This property has subsequently been incorporated into the 18,127± acre San Diego Wildlife Refuge. Also, to the north and adjoining the San Diego Wildlife Refuge is the 1,186± San Miguel Conservation Bank, managed by USFWS and established as part of the San Miguel Ranch residential development project.

The subject region supports one of the richest, diverse assemblages of unique and sensitive biological resources in Southern California. This includes core populations of a number of State and federal listed species, such as the coastal California gnatcatcher, peregrine falcon, cactus wren, Otay tarplant, barrel cactus, orange-throated whiptail and San Diego horned lizard.

The subject property is located within the “South Parcel” of the proposed San Miguel Ranch, residential subdivision development. The San Miguel Ranch development is approximately 209 acres in size and with 319 proposed residential lots. Construction and grading of the residential lots and offsite improvements is underway. The subject property is located in the southern portion of the subdivision and if developed could accommodate 14 high-end residential lots.

Significant core populations of the federally-endangered and State-threatened, Otay tarplant have been identified within the southern portions of the residential development. As part of a stipulated court settlement related to the San Miguel Ranch development, USFWS has entered into agreements with the developer that will provide for the donation and acquisition of these core areas. This includes the 184.72 acres to be donated by the developer to USFWS along with the acquisition of the subject property.

The subject property is vacant with a level to hilly terrain. The primary purpose of the acquisition is protection of significant populations of Otay tarplants observed on the property. In addition to the Otay tarplants, federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatchers and State-endangered peregrine falcons have also been observed foraging on the property.

The USFWS has entered into an “Agreement for the Purchase of Lands” with the property owner, to acquire the property based on its fair market value. The property has been appraised and the value of the property has been approved by the DGS at \$1,700,000.00 conditioned upon final recording of the approved subdivision map. In addition to the grant amount, an additional \$3,000.00 is estimated to be needed for DGS and other administrative costs, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$1,703,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff review and approve all documents pertaining to the Grantee's acquisition, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase or sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into escrow established for the proposed acquisition.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Means reported that Mr. Richard Grimes representing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Means provided clarification to Mr. Klass and Mr. Flores regarding the cost per acre and connectivity of the parcels in the project area.

Staff recommended the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,703,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (6), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,703,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (6), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

25. San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 3, \$9,020,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the acquisition of 7,485± acres of privately-owned land as an addition to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area in north central San Diego County. Mr. Randy Nelson briefly described the project and its location.

The subject property is located approximately 11 miles east of the community of Julian at Scissors Crossing, which is the intersection of State Route 78 and San Felipe Valley Road. In 1995, the Wildlife Conservation Board approved the initial San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area acquisition, consisting of 566± acres, together with a 200± acre donation. An additional acquisition in 1998 increased the total acreage of the wildlife area to 1,087± acres.

The proposed acquisition will provide for the protection of additional deer habitat while also protecting a critical migration corridor. The subject property will significantly increase the width of part of a corridor stretching from the San Diego River in the Cleveland National Forest to the west, to the Anza Borrego Desert State Park which is contiguous with the subject property on the east. The west boundary of the subject abuts lands of the DFG and the Bureau of Land Management.

The subject property is an extremely important fawning and summer habitat for southern mule deer occupying the east-central desert of San Diego County. The deer use the riparian and oak woodland habitat in this valley for fawning and to obtain water and quality forage during the dry summer months. San Felipe Valley also supports a relatively high density resident deer population throughout the year. The property is currently used for cattle grazing and light recreation, including deer hunting and horseback riding. Hunting also occurs on adjacent public and private lands. In addition to protecting summer and fawning habitat for mule deer, major goals for this acquisition are the enhancement of the area for wildlife habitat and public access where it does not conflict with the maintenance of the habitat values.

Major wildlife species represented within the property include deer, mountain lion, coyote, bobcat, gray fox, badger, golden eagle, California quail, mourning dove and several species of raptors. The area has critical habitat, including the Riversidian alluvial fan sage scrub, necessary to support the endangered Least Bell's vireo and the endangered unarmored threespine stickleback.

The DFG has identified the subject property as being within a Significant Natural Area and has recommended the purchase of the property, which would be incorporated into, and managed in conjunction with, the existing wildlife area. The DFG proposes to develop a management plan in consultation with the County of San Diego and the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority to manage the overall area as part of the San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of ownership interest in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

The property owners have agreed to sell at the appraised fair market value of \$9,000,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) proposes to contribute \$1,000,000.00 toward the purchase or will be set up as an endowment for management. However, as of this Board meeting, details of TNC's contribution have not been projected. Therefore, it is proposed that the Board allocate \$9,000,000.00 toward the purchase price of the property. It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, including appraisal, title, escrow and DGS' review costs, bringing the total allocation for this purchase to \$9,020,000.00. In the event that TNC contributes all or a portion of the \$1,000,000.00 toward the purchase of the subject property as anticipated, the remaining balance of the Board's allocation herein will be recovered at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Flores requested clarification regarding access for hunting in the area. Mr. Nelson explained that the management plan will include hunting and that the Joint Powers Authority was in support of the project.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this acquisition as proposed; allocate \$9,020,000.00 from California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the purchase price and associated costs; authorize acceptance of up to \$1,000,000.00 from The Nature Conservancy to cover a portion of the acquisition costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this acquisition as proposed; allocate \$9,020,000.00 from California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the purchase price and associated costs; authorize acceptance of up to \$1,000,000.00 from The Nature Conservancy to cover a portion of the acquisition costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

26. Natural Community Conservation Planning, Orange and San Diego Counties \$36,005,375.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation of a \$36,005,375.00 grant to the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) in a cooperative effort to facilitate the acquisition of real properties to be owned and managed by the State of California and other federal, State, local and qualified non-profit entities serving as the State's numerous public partners in a program that takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. Ms. Debbie Townsend briefly described the project and its location.

The Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program is a cooperative effort to protect habitats and species. The program, which began in 1991 under the State's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, is broader and more flexible in its orientation and objectives than the California and Federal Endangered Species Acts. These laws are designed to identify and protect individual species that have already declined in number significantly. The primary objective of the NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem scale while accommodating compatible land use.

The focus of the initial effort was the coastal sage scrub habitat of Southern California, home to the California gnatcatcher and approximately 100 other potentially threatened or endangered species. This much-fragmented habitat is scattered over more than 6,000 square miles and encompasses large parts of three counties - Orange, San Diego and Riverside, and smaller portions of two others - Los Angeles and San Bernardino. Today 59 local government jurisdictions, scores of landowners from across these counties, federal wildlife authorities and the environmental community are actively participating in the program. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provide the necessary support, direction and guidance to NCCP participants to oversee the numerous activities that compose the development of a conservation plan. In addition, both the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) and the USFWS have acquired property as well as provided acquisition grants to their local partners to further implement their planning efforts in these counties.

The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Park Bond Act) specifically provides funding for the acquisition of real property within NCCP's approved by the DFG prior to January 1, 1999, which includes the Orange County Central-Coastal subregion, encompassing 209,000 acres, and approved in July, 1996. It was followed a year later by the County of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Plan Reserve System which is considerably larger and it includes 582,243 acres. The third and last of the NCCP's approved before 1999, is with the San Diego Gas & Electric Company and covers linear utility easements that cannot be depicted on a map, but extend into Orange and Riverside Counties to the extent the utilities' easements and equipment extend into those

jurisdictions.

The SCC has adopted resource enhancement plans providing for the acquisition of lands within the core biological resource areas and associated habitat linkages identified in the approved NCCP areas. The Board's proposed grant would allow the State to use the Park Bond Funds to carry out NCCPs and adopted enhancement plans for purposes of wildlife habitat preservation, compatible public uses, and in order to enhance the natural and scenic character of coastal watersheds and their resources. The DFG and USFWS have identified high priority properties to be acquired using the grant funds. The project list may be expanded to add properties consistent with NCCPs approved by DFG prior to January 1, 1999, as recommended by the DFG, and upon mutual agreement of the Board and SCC.

The proposed grant provides that in those instances where a federal, State, local or non-profit entity may be the recipient of the grant funds, and prior to the disbursement of those funds into an escrow, SCC will have primary responsibility to coordinate those acquisitions, including, but not limited to selection of appraisals, if needed, and obtaining approval of the appraisal by the Department of General Services (DGS), review and approval of all acquisition related documents including the deed restrictions as required by the grant, and authorization from its own governing board. In those instances where the State will be directly acquiring title to the property, Board staff will have primary responsibility to facilitate the acquisitions, including obtaining approval of the appraisal and acquisition project by DGS, authorization for acceptance of title by the Board or Fish and Game Commission, and authorization from SCC's governing board.

This proposed grant is exempt from CEQA requirements as a Categorical Exemption under Section 15313, Class 13 as the acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. The appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval of the Board.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League.

Mr. Flores and Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding control of the management plans on these properties. Ms. Townsend stated that the Department of Fish and Game may manage some of the properties, some may be cooperatively managed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others may be managed by other federal, State, local or qualified nonprofit organizations.

Staff recommended that the Board approve a grant and related costs to the State Coastal Conservancy to be applied toward the purchase of one or more real properties as proposed; authorize acceptance of title to those lands by the State, where appropriate; allocate \$36,005,375.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6)–NCCP for the grant including related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize

staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve a grant and related costs to the State Coastal Conservancy to be applied toward the purchase of one or more real properties as proposed; authorize acceptance of title to those lands by the State, where appropriate; allocate \$36,005,375.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6)–NCCP for the grant including related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

27. Cleveland National Forest Wildlife Corridors, Orange County \$13,235,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation of a grant to The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to acquire up to 5,300± acres of land, for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat, highly valued endemic flora and fauna species, as well as regionally significant wildlife corridors located within the Cleveland National Forest's Trabuco District (CNF) in the Santa Ana Mountains. Ms. Linda Drake briefly described the project and its location.

The Trabuco District is east of the cities of Santa Ana and Mission Viejo and connects to Camp Pendleton on the south side. Chino Hills State Park is to the north and Highway 15 parallels the forest to the east. The CNF includes districts in Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties. TPL has identified for acquisition, at least sixteen main parcels with four having multiple ownerships, a minimum of 5,321 acres within the CNF, all in the Trabuco District.

The identified properties lie within the Central Coastal Orange County Sub region of the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP), one of two areas to have executed NCCP agreements prior to January, 1999, and are, therefore, eligible for Proposition 12 NCCP funding. TPL has acquired six ownerships in the immediate vicinity and is in the process of transferring those properties to an appropriate entity for management in accordance with NCCP goals for the Sub region. In addition, TPL is in negotiations with a number of other willing sellers and/or donors of properties within the identified group of ownerships. To help leverage the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) grant, TPL is soliciting contributions from the Orange County Parks Department, CNF and several private foundations. Potential managers for the properties proposed for acquisition include, primarily, the County of Orange and the US Forest Service, but may also include other responsible land management entities, such as the University of California. Appropriate managers would be identified in consultation with DFG and Board staff.

Within the last year, the Irvine Company generously donated conservation easements on pristine natural lands in excess of 11,000 acres bordering the western perimeter of the CNF, Trabuco District. This land dedication, along with TPL's identified parcels, will complete a once threatened connection between designated NCCP lands on the west in Weir Canyon with lands in Limestone Canyon to the Southeast. Within the last few months, another significant property, Barham Ranch (500+ acres), was purchased by the County of Orange and now solidifies even further the NCCP lands.

A combination of various factors, such as topography, watersheds and climate has created a unique mix of highly threatened endemic floral communities. A wide range of fauna species are known to occur in the CNF and surrounding lands. Coastal sage scrub is found on many of the identified properties. Since most of the coastal sage scrub remaining has been heavily grazed or destroyed by fire and invasive exotics, protection of this threatened sage scrub is a primary goal of the Southern California NCCP program. From coyotes to turtles, birds to cougars the forest remains prime foraging and nesting habitat for many species. Highly threatened, endangered and species of special concern are found throughout the Santa Ana Mountains. Herpetofauna species, such as the San Diego horned lizard, red diamondback rattlesnake and two-striped garter snake will benefit from these land acquisitions. Avifaunal species, including the endangered California gnatcatcher, as well as golden eagles, spotted owls and California quail will gain habitat. Of more concern for the viability of the mammal populations is the maintenance of high level predators such as the mountain lion, bobcat, and coyote, as well as their prey source, the mule deer, grey squirrels and rabbits. The maintenance of the mountain lion population is critical to the survival of all species within the forest and environs, both flora and fauna. Connections between permanently preserved open space and the CNF will better secure the mountain lion population in the forest.

The Board's proposed grant, in the amount of \$13,215,000.00 would be used to facilitate the acquisition of one or more properties within or in close proximity to the CNF. It is anticipated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses, including Department of General Services' review costs. Therefore, the total recommended allocation for this proposal is \$13,235,000.00.

This project is exempt from the California Environment Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed upon approval by the Board.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the selection of sites will be subject to approval of staff on the Board in consultation with the DFG. The grant further provides that staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into escrow.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a large number of support letters for this project including letters from Lynn Sadler, Executive Director, Mountain Lion Foundation; Laura Cohen, Executive Director, The Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy; Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League; Anne Fege, Forest Supervisor from the Cleveland National Forest; Michael Hearst of the Michael G. Hearst Company; Ron Krueper, Park Superintendent, California Department of Parks and Recreation; Vick Wilson, Director, Orange County Public Facilities and Resources Department; Monica Florian, The Irvine Company; Mary Fegraus, Laguna Canyon Foundation; Bill Campbell, Orange County Board of Supervisors; Paul Beier, School of Forestry in Northern Arizona, Theresa Sears, Save Barham Ranch; Claire Schlotterbeck; Sue Craig, Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance and Constance Spenger, Friends of the Tecate Cypress.

Mr. Flores requested clarification regarding plans for public access. Ms. Drake explained that plans for public access would be determined through the management plans of the Department of Fish and Game. Ms. Drake reported that Mr. Scott Ferguson of the Trust for Public Land was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of a grant to the Trust for Public Land to be applied toward the purchase of one or more properties as proposed; allocate \$13,235,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clear Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350(a)(6) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the award of a grant to the Trust for Public Land to be applied toward the purchase of one or more properties as proposed; allocate \$13,235,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clear Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350(a)(6) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *28. Cleveland National Forest Wildlife Corridors, Expansion 1, \$1,795,000.00
Orange County

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation of a grant to the County of Orange to purchase approximately 450 acres of land, for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat, highly valued endemic flora and fauna species, as well as regionally significant wildlife corridors located in the areas of Fremont and Harding Canyons within the Santa Ana Mountains in the Cleveland National Forest (CNF), Trabuco District. Ms. Linda Drake briefly described the project and its location.

The Trabuco District lies east of the cities of Santa Ana and Mission Viejo and connects to Camp Pendleton on the south side. Chino Hills State Park is to the north and Highway 15 parallels the Forest to the east. The CNF includes districts in Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties. The Fremont property is located in the northwesterly corner of the CNF, Trabuco District. It is bordered on the west by the Irvine Open Space Dedication area, on the north and east by U.S. Forest Service, and is contiguous to land owned by The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to the south. The Harding property is in Harding Canyon within the CNF, Trabuco District. The parcel is bordered on the east and south by US Forest Service land and on the north and west by private owners.

The identified properties lie within the Central Coastal Orange County Sub region of the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP), one of two areas to have executed NCCP agreements prior to January, 1999, and are, therefore, eligible for Proposition 12 NCCP funding. The County of Orange will take over management of the properties from TPL in accordance with NCCP goals for the Sub region.

Within the last year, the Irvine Company generously donated conservation easements on pristine natural lands in excess of 11,000 acres bordering the western perimeter of the CNF. This land dedication, along with other identified parcels to be acquired in the future, will complete a once threatened connection between designated NCCP lands on the west in Weir Canyon with lands in Limestone Canyon to the Southeast. Within the last few months, another significant property Barham Ranch (500+ acres), was purchased by the County of Orange and now solidifies even further the NCCP lands.

A combination of various factors, such as topography, watersheds and climate has created a unique mix of highly threatened endemic floral communities. A wide range of fauna species are known to occur in the CNF and surrounding lands. Coastal sage scrub is found on many of the identified properties. Since most of the coastal sage scrub remaining has been heavily grazed or destroyed by fire and invasive exotics, protection of this threatened sage scrub is a primary goal of the Southern California NCCP program. From coyotes to turtles, birds to cougars the forest remains prime foraging and nesting habitat for many species. Highly threatened, endangered and species of special concern are found throughout the Santa Ana Mountains.

Herpetofauna species, such as the San Diego horned lizard,

red diamondback rattlesnake and two-striped garter snake will benefit from these land acquisitions. Avifaunal species, including the endangered California gnatcatcher, as well as golden eagles, spotted owls and California quail will gain habitat. Of more concern for the viability of the mammal populations is the maintenance of high level predators such as the mountain lion, bobcat and coyote, as well as their prey source, the mule deer, grey squirrels and rabbits. The maintenance of the mountain lion population is critical to the survival of all species within the forest and environs, both flora and fauna. Connections between permanently preserved open space and the CNF will better secure the mountain lion population in the forest.

The appraised value for the properties is \$1,785,000.00. Department of General Services (DGS) is in the process of reviewing these appraisals and their approval will be required prior to funding these acquisitions. It is anticipated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses, including DGS' review costs, bringing the Board's total allocation for this proposal to \$1,795,000.00. This project is exempt from the California Environment Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed upon approval by the Board.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff will review all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into escrow.

Mr. Flores stressed the Department of Fish and Game's management plans take into consideration every feasible public access, including hunting.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Orange to be applied toward the purchase of one or more properties as proposed; allocate \$1,795,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clear Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12), Section 5096.350(a)(6) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Orange to be applied toward the purchase of one or more properties as proposed; allocate \$1,795,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clear Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12), Section 5096.350(a)(6) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned. Motion carried.

29. Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, \$6,580,000.00
Expansions 4, 5 and 6, Riverside County

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the acquisition of fee and easement over a single ownership totaling 3,869± acres of vacant land as expansions to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, near the towns of Murrieta and Temecula, in southwestern Riverside County. The acquisition will allow for further protection of the plateau and provide and preserve the three mile linkage between the plateau and 250,000 acres of public land including the San Mateo Wilderness Area, Cleveland National Forest and Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base to the north and to the west. Mr. William Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

The project area is located on Clinton Keith/Tenaja Road about two miles southwest of the town of Murrieta. Interstate 15 is about three miles easterly of the plateau and is the major connecting highway between Los Angeles, the Inland Empire and San Diego. The DFG's reserve, at its current size, contains 1,150± acres. When combined with the properties owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Riverside County and the Metropolitan Water District, the total protected area is in excess of 8,200+ acres.

Initial acquisition of the reserve began in 1991, and has grown through public and private acquisitions to its current size. Development has been steady in the immediate area of the reserve over the past 10 years with a number of homes built on privately-owned parcels within the corridor. Additional construction and development within the acquisition area is considered to be detrimental to the corridor and to the free movement and migration of the many different species that live there.

The plateau is a biologically diverse area which supports over 450 native plant species, 27 reptiles, 35 mammals and at least 173 bird species and an unknown number of invertebrates. The reserve contains over 1,500 acres of oak woodland with the last, naturally producing Engelmann oak groves in southern California. There are about 3,000 acres of native grassland crossed with bands of southern sycamore and live oak riparian woodland habitat. There are numerous vernal pool areas and extensive coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats. The creeks that drain the plateau contain deep pools, called Tenajas, which provide a year round water source. Large mammals using the plateau include mountain lion, deer and badger.

When acquired, the project area will be managed by the DFG in conjunction with the existing reserve. It is anticipated that the area will offer passive recreational uses, consistent with preservation and enhancement of the habitat and species.

The DFG has identified Expansions 4, 5 and 6 as being critical to the continuance of the reserve and has recommended the purchase of these proposed properties, as follows:

Expansion 4: This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 3,534+ acres of land improved with a visitor center and single family residence.

Expansion 5: This proposal is to consider the acceptance of the assignment of a conservation easement over 170± acres of land.

Expansion 6: This proposal is to consider the conditional acceptance of 165± acres of land in fee.

The appraised, fair market value of Expansions 4, 5 and 6, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), is \$14,000,000.00. TNC, the current owner, has agreed to sell all three expansions for \$6,500,000.00. An additional allocation of \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover appraisal, title, escrow and DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation to \$6,530,000.00. In addition to TNC's proposed donation of \$7,500,000.00 toward the purchase of the property, they have proposed to establish an endowment from the Board's allocation in the amount of \$3,500,000.00, to cover operations and maintenance for the plateau in perpetuity.

The proposed acquisitions are exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer in interests of land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Gallup reported that Ms. Theresa O'Rourke representing The Nature Conservancy was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received letters of support for this project from Sedra Shapiro, Executive Director, San Diego State University Field Stations Programs; Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League; Bob Buster, Riverside County Supervisor; John Rogers, General Manager, Santa Rosa Community Services District; Tom Tisdale, Riverside Unit Chief, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and John and Soma Stickler, Tenaja property owners.

Mr. Flores commented that this was a rather large acquisition and requested clarification regarding the restricted access. Mr. Gallup explained that there are trails throughout some areas however the 5-, 10- and 20-acre lots will not have public access. Mr. Gallup explained that hunting was available in the Cleveland National Forest not far from these properties and that additional public access would be considered in the Department's management plan.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the acquisition of Expansions 4, 5 and 6 as proposed; allocate \$56,159.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (3), and \$6,523,841.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the purchase price and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the acquisition of Expansions 4, 5 and 6 as proposed; allocate \$56,159.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (3), and \$6,523,841.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the purchase price and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

Mr. Flores clarified that he often inquires about public access because it is important that everybody has as much access to these properties as possible, considering the various interests of all individuals, now and in the future.

30. Wilson Creek Riparian Corridor, Riverside County \$5,005,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation a grant to Riverside County to assist in the acquisition of 884± acres in southwestern Riverside County. This is one of the first acquisitions in the Wilson Creek Riparian Corridor consisting of a total of approximately 10,125± acres. Acquisition of this property will help establish and protect a contiguous landscape linkage, habitat nodes for wildlife dispersal and wildlife connectivity between the Cleveland National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest. The acquisition also conforms with the goals of the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and will further implement joint federal, State and local Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) efforts in southwestern Riverside County. Ms. Teri Muzik briefly described the project and its location.

The subject property is located south of the Cahuilla Indian Reservation, east of Highway 371, in Anza, California. The area is primarily mountainous, arid watershed. The topography is sloping to moderate in the lower elevations with steeper slopes on

the mountainous terrain. The subject property is accessible via secondary, unpaved dirt and gravel roads. Primary roads closest to the subject

property are Elmer Creek Road to the west and Terwilliger Road to the east. The closest major highway is State Route 371 located approximately two miles to the west. Southwestern parcels are fronted by Tule Peak Road. Other secondary roads that either front or intersect the subject property are Nicholson Spring Road, Cary Road, Ramsey Road and Walker Ranch Road.

The location of the proposed acquisition is important to the development of a contiguous landscape linkage for resident wildlife and wildlife connectivity between the Cleveland National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest via native upland and riparian habitat. Protection of this area is critically important for the integrity of plant and animal communities in this biologically unique area.

The subject area supports a mix of natural plant communities that are unique to this region. Although coastal sage scrub, riparian and grassland plant communities occur elsewhere, the commingling of these vegetative types in the area has produced new and undefined combinations of communities. The desert influence on climate is very apparent by the number of Sonoran Desert plant species that make their westernmost extension into the area. The mix of plant communities has resulted in habitats suitable for an abundance and diversity of species, including many endemic species. Many butterfly species were identified in the area, including the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly. The area also provides breeding and foraging habitat for an abundance of wildlife including the San Diego horned lizard, orange-throated whiptail, coastal western whiptail and the coast patch-nosed snake, all federal and State species of concern. Least Bell's vireo, coastal California gnatcatcher, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, golden eagle and burrowing owls have also been identified in the area.

The County proposes that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objects may include providing public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Upland game hunting opportunities may be available with adequate space for safe separation of public users.

The proposed grant will provide the County with \$5,000,000.00 toward its acquisition of the subject property. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, including Department of General Services' appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation to \$5,005,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisal, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly in the County's escrow account for this purchase.

This acquisition is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25 as a transfer of ownership of interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of

Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Ms. Muzik reported that Greg Reden, representing the landowners, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores requested clarification regarding adequate space and upland game opportunities. Ms. Muzik explained that this acquisition is a portion of a larger ranch and that the County plans on allowing hunting activities but wants to insure the hunting is on a portion far away from the public.

Ms. Pamela Milligan expressed the County's support and appreciation for the Board's approval of this project and its previous participation in other projects in the Riverside County area.

Mr. Hight commended the County and everyone involved in the planning efforts that address transportation, housing and a conservation plan, all to be completed in three and one-half years.

Mr. Wright thanked Ms. Milligan for attending this meeting. He stated that a couple of months ago he met with Riverside County and DFG staff to review potential acquisitions and jointly established some priorities for future projects in that area. Mr. Wright expressed his appreciation for the County's partnership in these efforts.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Riverside to be applied toward the purchase of 884± acres in southwestern Riverside County as proposed; allocate a total of \$5,005,000.00 for the grant and related expenses from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Riverside to be applied toward the purchase of 884± acres in southwestern Riverside County as proposed; allocate a total of \$5,005,000.00 for the grant and related expenses from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

31. Alberhill Conservation Area, Expansion 1, Riverside County \$5,010,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation of a block grant to the County of Riverside to assist in its purchase of one or more real properties, totaling up to 9,422± acres in southwestern Riverside County along Interstate 15. Mr. Steve Christensen briefly described the project and its location.

The conservation area is located in the Temescal Valley, between the cities of Corona and Lake Elsinore. Specifically this area begins approximately five miles south of Corona, extends linearly in a southeast direction for 6.5± miles, and is bounded on the south by the northernmost extend of the city of Lake Elsinore. The proposed area straddles Interstate 15 and is abutted by the Cleveland National Forest on the west and the Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve to the northeast.

The Wildlife Conservation Board previously approved a \$6,000,000.00 grant to Riverside County to assist in its acquisition of this conservation area during its meeting on November 28, 2001.

The Alberhill Conservation Area is strategically important to the development of the County's Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) because it links habitats and provides wildlife corridors within a large network of preserves in southwestern Riverside County. The majority of the area is dominated by Riversidean sage scrub, an important habitat for several native species such as the California gnatcatcher and Quino checkerspot butterfly. Other upland habitats include the Diegan coastal sage scrub and chamise chaparral. Habitats associated with the Temescal Creek drainage include riparian scrub, riparian forest, southern willow scrub and southern cottonwood willow, important areas for the Least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Acquisition of the real property will preserve a regionally-significant wildlife corridor and protect threatened and endangered wildlife, native plants and special habitats and further implement joint federal, State and local Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) efforts in western Riverside County.

The County proposes that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include providing public access for recreational pursuits such as fishing and hiking as well as educational opportunities through interpretive kiosks and signs.

The Board's proposed grant would provide the County with \$5,000,000.00 to facilitate its acquisition of one or more properties within the conservation area. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, including Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,010,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that Department of Fish and Game will review and approve the property being proposed for acquisition by the County. The grant further provides that staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the County's escrow account or accounts for the purchase of these properties.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Riverside to be applied toward the acquisition of up to 9,422± acres, as proposed; allocate a total of \$5,010,000.00 for the grant and related expenses, from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the award of a grant to the County of Riverside to be applied toward the acquisition of up to 9,422± acres, as proposed; allocate a total of \$5,010,000.00 for the grant and related expenses, from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

32. Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve, Expansions 24 and 25, \$4,083,000.00
Riverside County

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the acquisition of two separate ownerships totaling 1,014± acres of vacant land as expansions to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve, in eastern Riverside County, and the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Assistance Grant, totaling \$4,000,000.00, from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to be applied toward the acquisition. These acquisitions will allow further protection of the blow sand wind corridor and ensure the viability of the

sand dependent species within the reserve. Mr. William Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

The project area is located in the Coachella Valley approximately one mile north of Interstate 10 about one-half mile easterly of the community of Thousand Palms. The DFG owns approximately 775 acres and when combined with the properties owned by Center for Natural Lands Management, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, State Department of Parks and Recreation and the USFWS, the total protected area is about 19,000+ acres.

Initial acquisition of the reserve began in 1982, and has grown through public and private acquisitions and exchanges to its current size. Development has been sporadic in the immediate area of the reserve over the past 20 years with a number of homes built within the sand source corridor. Additional construction and development within the acquisition area is considered to be detrimental to the corridor as the sand transport would be blocked and the dune habitat to the east within the current reserve would not be maintained. Historically, the blow sand was thought to originate from northerly of the reserve through Thousand Palms Canyon. More recent studies have found that the blow sand source is from five smaller canyons to the northwest of the reserve.

The DFG has identified Expansions 24 and 25 as being critical to the protection of the reserve and has recommended the purchase of these proposed expansions. When acquired, the acreage will be incorporated into, and managed in conjunction with, the existing reserve. It is anticipated that the area will offer passive recreational uses, as the habitat is maintained and developed in conjunction with the reserve. Both of the properties are currently vacant.

Preservation of the properties identified within the sand source area (blow sand corridor) will ensure the continued success of the reserve and enhance the habitat for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. The reserve also provides habitat for several other species that are currently being considered in the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, including the flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley milk vetch, Palm Springs pocket mouse, Palm Springs ground squirrel and the Coachella giant sand treader cricket. Therefore, consistent with long-range planning purposes, staff of the Board recommends the following two proposals, as follows:

Expansion 24: This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 64± acres of unimproved desert land. The property owner has agreed to sell the property at its appraised, fair market value of \$918,120.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). An additional allocation of \$14,880.00 is needed for appraisal, escrow, title insurance and the DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this expansion to \$933,000.00.

Expansion 25: This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 950± acres of unimproved desert land. The property owner has agreed to sell the property at its appraised, fair market value of \$7,125,000.00 as approved by the DGS. An additional allocation of \$25,000.00 is needed for appraisal, escrow, title insurance and the DGS' review costs bringing the total proposed allocation for this expansion to \$7,150,000.00.

The two purchases, including costs, total \$8,083,000.00. The USFWS has awarded an HCP Assistance Grant for this project, totaling \$4,000,000.00, which will be applied toward the purchase price of the two properties. Staff proposes that the Board approve an allocation of \$4,083,000.00 for the remainder of the purchase price.

The proposed acquisitions are exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of interests in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the acquisition of Expansions 24 and 25 as proposed; authorize acceptance of an HCP Assistance Grant totaling \$4,000,000.00 to cover a portion of the purchase price; allocate \$1,086,121.00 from the Safe Neighborhood and Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), and \$2,996,879.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the balance of the purchase price and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the acquisition of Expansions 24 and 25 as proposed; authorize acceptance of an HCP Assistance Grant totaling \$4,000,000.00 to cover a portion of the purchase price; allocate \$1,086,121.00 from the Safe Neighborhood and Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), and \$2,996,879.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the balance of the purchase price and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

33. Joughin Ranch, Los Angeles County \$5,005,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the allocation of a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to assist in the cooperatively funded acquisition of 1,732.53 ± acres of land for the protection of wildlife habitat and habitat corridors to promote the recovery of rare and sensitive species. Other partners on this project include the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy (SMMC), the County of Los Angeles and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The property is located on the southern slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains, north of Chatsworth, in Los Angeles County. Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

The Santa Susana Mountains run east to west along the northern edge of the San Fernando and Simi Valleys, spanning from Los Angeles County on into Ventura County. They form a natural linkage between the San Gabriel Mountains to the east, part of the Los Angeles National Forest, and the Sespe Condor Sanctuary to the northwest, part of the southern portion of the Los Padres National Forest. Extending south from the Santa Susana Mountains is a small ridge, separating the Los Angeles River and Arroyo Simi Creek watersheds, extending to the Simi Hills and on into the coastal Santa Monica Range, providing one of the only natural linkages from the coast to inland national forests.

The terrain of the Santa Susana Mountains is similar to other southern coastal ranges, with rolling hills rising up to steep ridges, ravines and mountains. Vegetation consists primarily of coastal live oak woodland, walnut woodlands, coastal sage scrub and native grasslands. Douglas fir forests can be found in some of the higher elevations and riparian areas exist along creeks and ravines. There are a number of year round creeks within the Santa Susana Mountains. The southern facing slopes drain into the Los Angeles River and Simi Arroyo watersheds and the northern facing slopes drain into the Santa Clara River.

The mountains support a full complement of Southern California large mammal species, including mountain lion, black bear, deer, bobcat, badger, coyote, long-tailed weasel, raccoon and ringtail cats. Raptor species include golden eagle, red tailed hawk, prairie hawk, Cooper's hawk, great horned owl, ferruginous hawk and the northern harrier. One of the unique and significant aspects of the Santa Susana Mountains is, despite their close proximity to extensive residential and urban development, they still retain substantial and viable wildlife ecosystems.

Other large conservation holdings within the Santa Susana Mountains include the 4,815 acre Rocky Peak Park and the 4,000 acre Santa Clarita Woodlands Park, both owned and operated by the SMMC and MRCA, respectively. Rocky Peak Park abuts the western border of the property and the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park is located approximately three miles to the northeast on the north facing slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains. Near the western terminus of the Santa Susana Mountains is the 3,000 acre Ventura County, Happy Camp Canyon Park. Another potential

holding is a proposed "set-aside" of 4,000 acres of open space, located

west of the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park, on the northern facing slopes of the mountains, a condition of the proposed Newhall Ranch development. Last September, the SMMC and MRCA acquired two additional properties totaling 404 acres along Browns Canyon, located next to and south of the subject property

The subject property is located on the eastern portion of the Santa Susana Mountains entirely within Los Angeles County. The topography ranges from rolling hills to steep hillsides, canyons and ridges. Devil Canyon and Browns Canyon are prominent features that run through the property and contain abundant plant and animal life. Devil Canyon contains the northwest headwaters of the Los Angeles River. The property contains most of the vegetation and wildlife endemic throughout the Santa Susana Mountain Range. There are numerous threatened, endangered and special listed species found in and around the property including the southern spotted owl, burrowing owl, San Diego horned lizard, San Diego desert wood rat, slender mariposa lily and the Santa Susan tarplant, to name a few. Also, because of the close proximity to the Sespe Condor sanctuary, there is a good potential for use of the property by the California condor as part of its foraging range.

Within the subject property there are three in-holdings, two near the center and one near the southwest corner. The two central in-holdings are zoned for agricultural use, having a combined acreage of 120 acres. One is developed with a residence that is used as a rental. The other property is unimproved. The owner of this second in-holding has indicated a possible desire to place a native plant nursery on the property. Access to the in-holdings is allowed under easement through the subject property. It is anticipated these in-holdings will have minimal impact on the preservation and intended use of the subject property. Also, the two owners have indicated they would be amenable to selling or placing conservation easements on their properties. The third in-holding is a 22± acre site once used as a Nike missile site and then later as a California Conservation Camp, now owned by the City of Los Angeles.

The management objectives for the property include: 1) protection of core habitat and corridor protection for wildlife, 2) protections and restoration of sensitive and declining plant communities, and 3) public use for low impact recreation, that may include hiking, biking, trailhead camping and nature-related studies. The SMMC is currently working with the County of Los Angeles to study the feasibility of establishing a regional open space park in the Browns/Devil Canyon watersheds that would include the subject property.

The urgency and need to protect the property is evident given the large amount of development that has occurred south of the property and the constant pressure to expand residential development into the vacant open spaces of the Santa Susana Mountains. Equally important is the public need for open space areas and the rare opportunity to preserve an area that has such a close proximity to a major urban area.

The MRCA has an option to acquire the property based on a fair market value appraisal reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), at \$7,180,000.00. To fund this cooperative project, the proposed participation from the Board is \$5,000,000.00. The remaining balance will be funded by other cooperative partners, including a \$500,000.00 grant from TNC and \$1,680,000.00 from Los Angeles County, from local Proposition A funds. The funding breakdown is shown below:

Los Angeles County, Proposition A	\$1,680,000.00
The Nature Conservancy	500,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	5,000,000.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$7,180,000.00

In addition to the grant amount, an additional \$5,000.00 is estimated to be needed for DGS and other administrative costs, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$5,005,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff review and approve all documents pertaining to the Grantee's acquisition, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase or sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Means reported that Rorie Skei, Judy Tamasi and Deborah Lambe from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,005,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a) (5), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,005,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a) (5), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

34. Sea West Ranch, San Luis Obispo County \$6,505,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the allocation of a grant to the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to assist in the cooperatively funded acquisition of 748± acres of land, for the protection of sensitive, threatened and endangered species and coastal habitat. The property is located along the Harmony Coast, between the communities of Cambria and Cayucos, in northern San Luis Obispo County. Other partners on this project include the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the American Land Conservancy (ALC). Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

The Harmony Coast area is a 15-mile stretch of mostly undeveloped shoreline located between the Pacific coastline on the west and State Highway 1 to the east on California's Central Coast. The general terrain is gently sloping hills and coastal bluffs, with a number of small creeks feeding into the ocean. The shoreline areas are mostly rocky, abutting up to coastal bluffs, interspersed with small sandy beach areas. To the east are the Santa Lucia Mountains, part of the California coastal range. The area is predominately rural, with large acreage ownerships used mostly for grazing and homesteads. A major landmark along this portion of the coast is Point Estero, located near the middle of the Harmony Coast.

Other conservation holdings in the area include the East-West ranch, located at the northern edge of the Harmony Coast near Cambria, and within The Nature Conservancy's Cambria Pines Conservation Area. Farther north on the coast is San Simeon State Beach/Hearst Castle State Park. Located near the southern portion of the Harmony Coast is Estero Bay State Park. For the most part the majority of the Harmony Coast is currently unprotected.

The subject property is located in the middle portion of the Harmony Coast, just north of Point Estero. The property has access from State Highway 1 via an unpaved driveway. Historically the property has functioned as a homestead for raising cattle, but is currently non-operational and fallow. The general terrain, habitat and wildlife found on the property are similar to that found throughout the Harmony Coast. The property contains an exceptional amount of native plants and grasses. According to plant ecologists, this type of native composition of coastal prairie grassland is

extremely rare along this portion of the California Coast, with the property providing one of the best known examples found south of San Francisco.

The main types of habitat found within the area include coastal prairie grasslands, coastal sage scrubs, rocky inter-tidal areas, riparian and emergent wetlands. There are a number of state and federal listed species found within these habitats, including the California red-legged frog, two-striped garter snake, southwestern pond turtle, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, bald eagle, golden eagle and the southern sea otter.

Other important habitat features found on site include two large ponds/reservoirs and small eucalyptus/cypress forest areas. The reservoirs provide significant wetland habitat for waterfowl and amphibians along this portion of the coast. The eucalyptus/cypress forest areas, while not native, provide important roosting and nesting areas for a number of raptors that frequent the property.

The urgency and need to protect the property is evident by the increased development that has occurred over the last 20 years, in areas just south of the Harmony Coast, between Morro Bay and Cayucos. Because of the property's outstanding scenic and climatic values, there is constant pressure to extend development farther north up into the Harmony Coast.

The resource agencies involved with this project (DPR, SCC, Department of Fish and Game) are working cooperatively to determine future management and use of the property. While DPR will be responsible for control of the property, all of the above parties will be involved in the development of a management plan, with the goals of protecting sensitive resources, while at the same time allowing public access consistent with the California Coastal Trail alignment.

The ALC has entered into a "Bargain Purchase and Sale Agreement" to acquire the property. The fair market value appraisal of the property, as approved by the Department of General Services, is \$17,500,000.00. The funding breakdown for the acquisition is as follows:

State Coastal Conservancy	\$6,600,000.00
Coastal Commission	460,000.00
Department of Parks and Recreation	1,000,000.00
Donation (Private)	2,940,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	6,500,000.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$17,500,000.00

In addition to the grant amount, an additional \$5,000.00 is estimated to be needed for DGS and other administrative costs, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$6,505,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff review and approve all documents pertaining to the Grantee's acquisition, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase or sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Means reported that Glen Williams, representing the American Land Conservancy, Rob Kane, representing the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Aaron Foxworthy, representing the landowners, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Staff recommended the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,505,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,505,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhoods Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), to fund the grant and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

35. Diablo Range Conservation Area, Bear Valley Unit, \$2,678,000.00
Expansion 1, Monterey County

Mr. Wright reported that this was a proposal to consider the allocation of a grant to the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) for a cooperative project to purchase a conservation easement over 6,917 ± acres of private land, for the conservation of riparian and oak woodland habitats, habitat corridors and protection of federal and State, threatened, endangered and special concern listed species. The property is located within the Diablo Range, approximately five miles northwest of the city of Parkfield, in Monterey County. Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

Other conservation holdings within the vicinity include the first Diablo Range Conservation Area (DRCA) Bear Valley Unit conservation easement, a 3,798 acre conservation easement, located adjacent and south of the subject property which was approved at the November 2002 Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Meeting. Located to the east and adjacent to the subject property is the 17,000± acre, Varian

Ranch conservation easement, which was acquired by the Trust for Public Land

through a cooperative project funded by the Packard Foundation, Caltrans and the WCB as approved at its May 2000 meeting. To the north is the 6,743± acre DRCA, Jacalitos Unit, a conservation easement acquired with Packard Foundation and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds and being held by the CRT. The total acreage in conservation, including the subject property, is 34,458± acres.

The general topography of the region consists of steep uplands and ravines along and near the crest areas of the Diablo Range, sloping down to rolling hills and broad valley terraces. The San Andreas rift also runs north and south through the western portions of the region. Watersheds drain east into the San Joaquin Valley and west into the Salinas River. Major tributaries include the Warthan, Jacalitos and Zapato Chino Canyon creeks located on the eastern slopes, the Big Sandy, Rancho Rico and Vineyard creeks located on the western slopes, and the Cholame Creek running south through the middle and southern portions of the area, before turning west and entering the Estrella River.

The major habitat types include valley and blue oak woodlands, riparian corridors, wetlands and savannah grassland areas. Large habitat corridors cross over the region supporting large mammals such as deer, wild hogs, bobcats and mountain lions and a variety of raptor species. Numerous stock ponds dot the area and are inhabited by aquatic wildlife. The entire upland and open space characteristics also provide natural scenic values.

Federal and state special status listed species include the San Joaquin kit fox, western pond turtle, prairie falcon, red-legged frog, California jewel-flower, San Benito spine flower and the recurved larkspur. It is also hoped that California condor populations can be reestablished within the southern portions of the Diablo Range, once part of the historical range of this rare species.

The subject property contains portions of all the habitat, wildlife and topographical features mentioned above. One of the main features of the subject property is the Cholame Creek Valley and the underlying San Andreas rift zone. Paved access is available out of Parkfield northwest along Slacks Canyon Road. The property is used predominately for cattle grazing with a small 200 acre flat portion having been farmed with open field crops. The property owner has no significant improvements within the subject area, however there are some fairly non-intrusive and mostly underground improvements on the property owned and operated by State and federal agencies for researching and monitoring seismic activity along the San Andreas rift zone.

The purpose of the proposed easement is to protect and preserve the conservation values of the property in perpetuity. Under the terms of the easement, current and historical agricultural land uses, grazing and farming, will be allowed to continue on a controlled basis. Both uses are consistent with the maintenance of conservation values on the property provided they are managed correctly. Under the terms of the easement, cattle grazing will be limited and monitored by the CRT based on residual dry matter measurements (a way of determining grazing capacity and

optimal use by measuring the amount of dry residual material found on the property).

Farming will be limited to areas and uses that have occurred historically on the property. Development rights are being acquired across the entire property. The CRT has completed a base line assessment of the current condition of the property and has developed a management plan for its future use.

The CRT and the owner have agreed to a purchase price of \$2,675,000.00 for the proposed conservation easement. This value was established, based on a fair market value appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The CRT will own the easement and monitor the property for compliance under the terms of the easement. In addition to the grant amount, an additional \$3,000.00 is estimated to be needed for DGS and other administrative costs, bringing the total allocation requested for this project to \$2,678,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff review and approve all documents pertaining to the Grantee's acquisition, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase or sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25 as the transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Means reported that Ms. Nita Vail, representing the California Rangeland Trust and Mr. Kevin Kester, the property owner, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended the Board approve the grant to the California Rangeland Trust as proposed; allocate \$2,678,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 40), Section 5096.650 to be applied toward the purchase price and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the grant to California Rangeland Trust as proposed; allocate \$2,678,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 40), Section 5096.650 to be applied toward the purchase price and related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned. Motion carried.

36. Glenwood Meadows, Santa Cruz County \$3,130,000.00

Due to the large number of people that wanted to address the Board, this agenda item was considered early in the meeting.

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to assist in its acquisition of fee and/or a conservation easement interest encumbering up to 167± acres, located in Santa Cruz County. Acquisition of the property will provide for the permanent protection and enhancement of sensitive plant and animal species known to occur on the site. Ms. Debra Townsend briefly described the project and its location.

The property, more commonly referred to as the Glenwood Meadows, is located in the northwest corner of the City of Scott's Valley. The property, containing a total of 195± acres of unimproved land, is located approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection of Glenwood Drive, Scotts Valley Drive and the Highway 17/Granite Creek Road exchange. The Glenwood property as a whole consists of two legal parcels, one located on the west side of Glenwood Drive north of the Scotts Valley High School and the second east of Glenwood Drive extending north to Canham Road and east to single family homes along Tabor Drive. The southern boundary of the property is the Siltanen Park and Vine Hill Elementary School east of Glenwood Drive and the Scotts Valley High School to the west.

The Glenwood site is one of the last larger meadows in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and is a host for important vegetation communities and wetlands. The property has been identified by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) as Significant Natural Area SCR-010 and, if protected, would be the only preserve in the area for grassland-related species in the rapidly developing Scotts Valley area. The property contains native grassland, riparian habitat and both seasonal and perennial wetlands.

A riparian habitat occurs along the West Branch of Carbonera Creek, a seasonal creek which runs north-south on the site. This creek does not provide salmonid habitat, but is tributary to Carbonera Creek and the San Lorenzo River, which provide spawning habitat for steelhead and coho salmon. There are also several seeps or springs, supporting additional wetland vegetation.

The site supports a number of sensitive plant and animal species, and the primary purpose of the acquisition is to protect these species. The site is home to the Scotts Valley spineflower (Federal Endangered), Mt. Diablo cottonweed, Gray's clover, Opler's longhorn moth and Ohlone tiger beetle, both Federal Species of Concern. The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), specifically provides funding for the acquisition of habitat for threatened and endangered species including the federally listed spineflower, and candidates for federal listing including Ohlone tiger beetle and Opler's longhorn moth.

The DFG has confirmed that the presence of these species on the Glenwood property and has recommended that the Board assist in its protection.

The Glenwood property carries Tentative Map approval for the subdivision of 49 residential lots and open space. The larger 195± acre property has been broken down into several components described in detail by the subdivision approved in September, 2001. The subdivision provides for the development of 49 lots, the majority of which are clustered on both sides of Glenwood Drive, with five of the lots clustered in two locations along Tabor Drive. Recognizing the significant resources on the remainder of the property, the subdivision map creates areas which are dedicated to the City of Scotts Valley primarily for passive park and the preservation and enhancement of natural resources and their habitat. The subdivision map also creates "Lot E" which could provide for the development of four residential lots and which will be dedicated to the City for use at the City's discretion in a manner compatible with the surrounding residential, park and open space uses.

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has indicated a willingness to assume responsibility for management of the park and open space parcels. The Board's proposed grant would provide the Land Trust with the opportunity to acquire a combination of fee title and conservation easements over the property. Should the Land Trust secure an interest in the City's Lot E parcel, the City has agreed to set up a portion of the proceeds as an endowment for future management of all of the open space areas.

The Department of General Services has reviewed an appraisal which valued both the fee and conservation easement interests of several of the components of the subdivision. Any negotiations by the Land Trust and/or the City will be limited to the appraised, fair market values of the components, as approved by the Department of General Services, not to exceed \$4,970,000.00. It is anticipated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses including the appraisal and Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$5,000,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide the Land Trust and the City with the time necessary to finalize their discussions and conclude any negotiations with the property owner. The grant also provides that staff of the Board must review and approve all documents associated with the acquisitions, including any appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance, prior to the deposit of funds into an escrow for the purchase of the property.

This project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of interest in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval of the project by the Board, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Ms. Townsend reported that many community members from Santa Cruz were in the audience including members of Save Scotts Valley, Friends of Glenwood; Katey

Bagley and many of her students; California Native Plant Society; Citizens for

Responsible Growth and the Center for Biological Diversity. She also introduced Laura Perry, Executive Officer for the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Laura Kuhn, Community Development Director for Scotts Valley, Stephany Aguilar, Council Member for Scotts Valley, Vice Mayor Cliff Barrett and Debbie Muth of Scotts Valley Planning Department.

Mr. Grey Hayes, representing the California Native Plant Society, Ms. Laura Perry, representing the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Ms. Hannah Levy, fourth grade student from Vine Hill Elementary School and Ms. Susan Krevitt, representing the Friends of Glenwood, addressed the Board and stressed the importance of preserving Glenwood Meadows, urging the Board's approval of this proposal. Ms. Laura Kuhn, representing the City of Scotts Valley, stated that the City strongly supports the grant proposal and that the City Council has worked very hard to resolve the diverse conflicts over this property for many years and is proud to have the opportunity to create a funding mechanism that will allow for the long-term management of this property. Ms. Stephany Aguilar, representing the City of Scotts Valley, requested the Board seriously consider the approval of this project and that the Board might consider including third-party enforcement rights to eliminate the possibility of this particular piece of land having eminent domain put upon it at a future time.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Wright stated that three years ago the legislature appropriated \$5 million for acquisition of central coast habitats such as the property in this proposal. Mr. Wright explained that there are two issues before the Board today. He stated the staff recommendation is that we allocate \$3,130,000.00 for this project for the amount of land covered by the grant agreement with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, which is the amount of land that the landowner, at this time, is expressing a willingness to sell to the Land Trust and the City. He added that the Board does not have the funds to purchase all of the lots in the subdivision and that the other issue raised is about the State taking an interest in the conservation easement that would be placed on the property between the City and the Land Trust for the larger open space parcel around the subdivided lots. Mr. Wright reported that since the State does not have any financial interest in that part of the meadow, he does not feel it is appropriate for the Board or the State to engage in being a party to the easement. He stated that such easement placed on the property would protect the property in perpetuity for its habitat and open space values and that kind of an arrangement would perhaps put the State in a position of monitoring daily use and would probably be difficult to manage. Therefore Mr. Wright recommended against it. He added that the question that is undecided is whether or not the Board would want to appropriate more than the \$3.1 to the full \$5 million that was in the legislation. Mr. Flores asked if the Board members wished to discuss that issue. The Board members agreed with Mr. Wright's assessment. Mr. Flores commended the community for its support of this project.

At this time Mr. Flores welcomed Assembly member Patty Berg to the meeting.

Staff recommended that the Board approve a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to be applied toward the purchases as proposed; allocate \$3,130,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(3) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to be applied toward the purchases as proposed; allocate \$3,130,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(3) for the grant amount and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

37. Wetland Habitat Restoration, Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, Alameda County \$2,260,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) for a partnership project to restore approximately 570 acres of tidal wetlands and enhance approximately 126 acres of salt pan and 95 acres seasonal wetlands. The partners in this proposal include the EBRPD, the California Wildlife Foundation, Cargill, Inc., the Cities of San Jose, Fremont and Milpitas, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through their National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant program and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The project is located on the Department's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, which lies on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay in the City of Hayward in Alameda County. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described the project and its location.

This 835-acre property, also known as the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Area, Baumberg Tract, was acquired from Cargill in 1996 with the expressed purpose of restoring wetland habitats. Approximately two-thirds of the area was to be converted from salt evaporation ponds to tidal marsh, and existing salt pans and seasonal wetlands on the remaining portions would be enhanced. Additional funds were appropriated by the Board and provided by the cities to begin the restoration process. In 1998, EBRPD and the Board entered into a contract to develop the planning documents, acquire all the necessary permits and to begin construction. The permitting process delayed the start of construction which finally started in 2001, when Cargill began dredging the new North Creek channel with its dredger, the Mallard.

The planning documents provided a realistic and accurate picture of what was needed at the site and how much it might cost. Hydrologic studies showed exactly how large the tidal channels would need to be in order to provide optimal tidal exchange to the new wetlands. Engineering and design provided accurate site evaluations and cost estimates. While this work indicated that additional funds would be required, sufficient time was spent to develop the most cost effective methods for completing the construction. Additional cost savings were realized through the elimination of two bridges and a levee; access and flooding protection that were no longer needed when the adjacent salt ponds were acquired from Cargill earlier this year.

The restoration plan calls for two tidal channels to be constructed, one is an extension of Mt. Eden Creek and the second will be North Creek, a side channel off Alameda Creek. Secondary and tertiary channels will be constructed, branching off these two main channels, which will reach into the farthest reaches of the new tidal marshes to provide total inundation. All channels will follow historic channel alignments wherever possible to provide the greatest likelihood of success. Culverts will be installed as necessary to allow for access on the levees. Water control structures will be installed to provide better water management to the salt pans and the seasonal wetlands. Finally, 1,400 feet of 48-inch plastic pipe and 23 combination flap/canal gates will be purchased and stockpiled to allow the DFG to manage the recently acquired adjacent salt ponds. These culverts will be installed by the DFG, possibly as early as the fall of 2003, to move water between ponds to maintain water levels and keep salinities from rising. The planning efforts for this restoration could provide a blueprint for future restoration on the 15,100 acres of South Bay salt ponds acquired from Cargill in February.

Once these improvements are completed, the site will provide a variety of habitats to benefit many different species. Tidal marshes provide habitat for three listed animals: the California clapper rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse, both federally and State listed endangered species, and the State listed threatened black rail. In addition, tidal marshes provide nursery habitat for many species of fish living in the Bay, and the adjacent mudflats provide a rich source of invertebrates for thousands of shorebirds. The salt pans that will be enhanced and maintained on site are one of the most important nesting sites in California for the western snowy plover, a federally listed threatened species. The seasonal wetlands are invaluable in winter for migrating waterfowl, such as the northern shoveler, and provide critical refuge to shorebirds during high tides when the mudflats are inundated. All in all, this is the most biologically significant restoration to date in the Bay Area, benefiting literally hundreds of species of animals.

Thus far, the restoration has included the development of detailed engineering and construction plans, the completion of the permits and environmental documents, the demolition and removal of an old building on site, and the first phase of the excavation of the North Creek and Alameda Creek channels. Total project costs estimated to be \$4,747,792.00. Partner contributions to present include \$649,191.00 from the Cities

of San Jose, Milpitas and Fremont (completed through

a separate contract with the California Wildlife Foundation), \$140,000.00 of in-kind work from Cargill, Inc., and \$1,698,601.00 from a previous contract with the Board. A National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant of \$500,000.00 was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which will be reimbursed to the Board upon completion of the project.

Cost estimates for the remaining portion of the restoration project, which will be funded in its entirety by the Board, have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Complete interior marsh construction	\$887,000.00
Bridge over Mt. Eden Creek	220,000.00
Final grading of levees and breaches	338,000.00
Purchase of culverts and gates	650,000.00
Construction management	165,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$2,260,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. An Environmental Impact Report was completed for this project in 2002.

Mr. Perrine reported that Mr. Jim Swanson, representing the Department of Fish and Game, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments.

Preston Lee Leslie addressed the Board stating that he protests any reference to the salt ponds that were acquired from Cargill because he owns a piece of every piece of the salt ponds in the south San Francisco Bay.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,260,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, Section 79572(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,260,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, Section 79572(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

38. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Chileno Creek, Marin County \$389,100.00

This project was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

39. Van Hoosear Wildflower Preserve, Sonoma County \$1,705,000.00

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOSD) to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over 165± acres for the preservation of extremely rare valley floor wildflower habitat. Ms. Teri Muzik briefly described the project and its location.

The VanHoosear Wildflower Preserve is located on Grove Street in Sonoma, California. The property lies on the southwestern edge of the Sonoma Valley, at the base of Sonoma Mountain, and is comprised of 165± acres of gently sloping grasslands oak savannah. The property is bordered on the east side by small acreage residential properties, and on the other three sides by large acreage holding, predominantly grazing land, vineyard and rural estates.

The primary purpose of this grant is to protect and preserve wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity. Carriger Creek and an unnamed tributary flow through the property, supporting riparian vegetation and prime steelhead spawning and rearing habitat, as well as habitat for the California red-legged frog. In the spring, a diverse display of native wildflowers carpets the grasslands and fills the many vernal swales.

The rare lily species *Fritillaria lilacea* has been found on the property. The preserve also provides a critical wildlife connection between the ridges and slopes of Sonoma Mountain and the valley floor, through a landscape that is increasingly developing with vineyards and rural estates.

Large mammals that have been seen on the property, such as mountain lion, deer, coyote, gray fox and bobcat, spend most of their time in the grassland or woodland habitat and have access to the water, shade and food provided by the riparian habitat. Many of these species move from the ridges of Sonoma Mountain to the valley floor in search of food and water and the VanHoosear Preserve can provide an uninterrupted pathway to travel.

The Sonoma Valley community has used the site to teach children and adults about biology, creek restoration and land stewardship. Sonoma and Marin County chapters of the Audubon Society and the California Native Plant Society have been visiting the site since the 1960s for biological and botanical studies. Adopt-A-Watershed, Americorps, El Verano School as well as the Sonoma Ecology Center's Research, Restoration and Education programs have all worked on projects on the site over the last 10 years.

Projects include a cattle enclosure on the site's tributary to Carriger Creek, seed collection, propagating and planting native tree species, restoring a headcut eroding the streambed and rebuilding two stream crossings. The projects were completed with volunteer labor, including the contributions of many children.

The property will continue to be managed with the primary goal of protecting and restoring existing natural botanical, aquatic and wildlife values. An additional goal would be to continue to provide limited access to the public for education purposes. Public access would be carefully managed to minimize disruption of the natural values of the property and to ensure the owner's privacy.

The appraised, fair market value of the property, as approved by the Department of General Services, is \$5,690,000.00. The owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to the SCAPOSD for \$5,000,000.00, thus providing a donation in the amount of \$690,000.00. In addition to the Board's grant in the amount of \$1,700,000.00, the SCAPOSD has committed \$3,300,000.00 toward the purchase of this property. It is anticipated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be necessary for administrative expenses, including DGS' appraisal review and other miscellaneous expenses, bringing the Board's total allocation for this proposal to \$1,705,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board's staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisal, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly in the SCAPOSD escrow account for this purchase.

This acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 23, as the transfer of ownership of interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Ms. Muzik reported that Marilyn Gude, one of the landowners, Richard Dale from the Sonoma Ecology Center, Misty Areias and Maria Cipriani, Assistant General Manager from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Congressman Mike Thompson.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Areias reported that their Board of Directors approved acquisition of the project last week and thanked the Board and staff for their efforts.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of the grant to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to be applied toward the purchase of a conservation easement over 165± acres of land as proposed; allocate \$1,705,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the award of the grant to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to be applied toward the purchase of a conservation easement over 165± acres of land as proposed; allocate \$1,705,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

40. Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Distribution System, \$1,490,000.00
Phases IV and V, Butte County

Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (DU) for a partnership project to construct Phases IV and V of an internal water conveyance system at the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. The partners in this proposal include DU, the Department, the North American Waterfowl Conservation Council, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The wildlife area is located approximately twelve miles southwest of the City of Gridley in Butte County. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described the project and its location.

The Gray Lodge Wildlife Area consists of more than 9,000 acres of seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian habitat, oak woodlands and upland grasslands. Acquisition of the site was initiated in 1931 by the DFG with the purchase of the 2,500 acre Gray Lodge Club. The Board has been involved for more than 50 years, beginning in 1949 with the acquisition of more than 4,000 acres. Since then, seven separate Board actions have increased the acreage of the wildlife area to its current size of approximately 9,200 acres. The water conveyance and drainage system for the wildlife area was pieced together over the years from the independent systems developed by the original landowners and has never been adequate to efficiently deliver or drain water from the area.

In 1997, DU completed a detailed survey of the wildlife area and developed a six-phase plan for upgrading the entire water delivery and drainage system. Phase I was completed in 2001 through a North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. The Board was asked to assist with Phase II in the fall of 2000, which was completed in 2002. Phase III, also completed in 2002, was funded by the DFG. The proposed project will complete the next two phases.

Phases IV and V are designed to construct nearly 36,000 feet of water delivery canals rehabilitate approximately 16,500 feet of existing water delivery canals, construct 10,500 feet of drainage canals and construct two siphons under Rutherford Road and three major water distribution structures. All minor water control structures in the new and rehabilitated canals will be replaced or rehabilitated as needed. These improvements will supply high-quality, gravity-fed surface water to 2,700 acres of the wildlife area.

Gray Lodge is unmatched in California for its diversity and numbers of wildlife present, with more than 200 species of birds, 30 mammal species and 25 species of reptiles and amphibians found on site. More than a million waterfowl visit the area each winter. These tremendous numbers of wildlife provide recreational enjoyment to thousands of visitors every year.

Cost estimates for this project have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Construct 34,800' water delivery canals	\$845,800.00
Rehabilitate 17,500' water delivery canals	346,250.00
Construct 10,500' drainage canals	217,259.00
One concrete distribution structure	80,000.00
One concrete metering structure	36,000.00
One concrete junction structure	150,000.00
Two concrete siphons	150,000.00
Gravel New levees	42,000.00
Irrigation system for Field 52	35,000.00
Survey and design	181,980.00
Project management	219,520.00
Administration	236,901.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$2,540,710.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,490,000.00
(excluding administration costs)	
Department of Fish and Game	270,000.00
NAWCA	581,050.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	199,660.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$2,540,710.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG will complete the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements.

Mr. Perrine reported that Vince Thompson, representing Ducks Unlimited, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Wright reported that the Board received a letter of support for this project from Bill Gaines, Director of the California Waterfowl Association.

Mr. Flores asked if this project would assist with the current mosquito problem. Mr. Perrine commented that the efficient movement of the water would help to minimize the mosquitoes in that area.

Mr. Flores stated that he grew up in that area and that it is a great place to easily view all kinds of wildlife.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,490,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Michael Flores that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,490,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially

Motion carried.

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| 41. | Habitat Restoration, Battle Creek Wildlife Area,
Shasta County | \$260,000.00 |
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Mr. Wright reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a cooperative project to restore approximately nine acres of wetland habitat and twenty-four acres of riparian forest habitat within the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Battle Creek Wildlife Area, located on lower Battle Creek near its confluence with the Sacramento River, approximately six miles east of the town of Cottonwood in Shasta County. Mr. Scott Clemons briefly described the project and its location.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has been involved in projects in the lower Battle Creek area since 1965, when funding was allocated to acquire 3.85 acres of federal surplus property to provide fishing access to Battle Creek. In 1977 the Board allocated funding for an access road and to improve that site with sanitary facilities, fencing and a parking area. The County of Shasta manages the area under a cooperative management agreement with the DFG. Working with the DFG, the Board also approved funding in 1982 to acquire land in the area that would become the Battle Creek Wildlife Area. Additional purchases were funded by the Board since that time and Battle Creek Wildlife Area now contains 582 acres. This property was acquired largely because of the high quality riparian, wetland and riverine habitats found in the area, and to provide public access opportunities. The DFG operates an interpretive program on a portion of the wildlife area which is a popular destination for school children and the general public as well. Battle Creek Wildlife Area acts as the core of protected riparian habitat along the lower end of Battle Creek. The Coleman National Fish Hatchery is situated immediately upstream of the wildlife area. This facility was established because of the importance of the creek to anadromous fisheries. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns a large parcel along the creek, buffering the wildlife area and adding to the length of protected riparian habitat. The BLM also holds a protective riparian easement on the Gover Ranch, adjacent to and downstream of the wildlife area.

In general, the project will restore wetland and riparian habitats within the Battle Creek Wildlife Area, and improve access for the public to view these and other existing habitat features of the wildlife area. Wetland restoration activities will consist of installing a diversion structure in the Carr/Kohn Ditch to replace the temporary canvas dam formerly used to divert water. A small ditch will be constructed to deliver water from the Carr/Kohn Ditch to the project site. Low levees will be constructed along contours to flood two separate units (approximately nine acres in total) to a depth of no more than 18 inches. These shallow depths are preferred by most waterbirds. Out-flow from the wetland units will be transported to Gover Ditch so water stays within this irrigation system and is available to downstream users. These improvements will restore former wetland habitat, diversifying the habitat types found on the wildlife area and elevating the groundwater table in the immediate area. An increase in the water table elevation will stimulate healthy riparian habitat and increase flows in Battle Creek. Three separate areas within the project site (located south of Gover Ditch) will be restored to riparian forest, totaling approximately 24 acres. These areas were heavily impacted by agricultural activities prior to acquisition by the State. A small irrigation well will be drilled and drip irrigation systems installed to irrigate newly planted trees. New planting will be maintained (irrigation, pest control and replanting) and monitored for approximately three years to ensure success of the effort. In addition to the habitat restoration activities, the proposed project will provide additional benefits to the public's viewing opportunities and for education. The Oak Tree Trail starts at an interpretive kiosk in the parking area adjacent to the proposed wetland restoration project, and winds through the riparian zone along Battle Creek. With the completion of the project, the trail will be rerouted to a portion of the new levee,

allowing increased opportunities for wetland education. This trail is very popular with bird watchers and school groups. The portion of the levee to be utilized for the nature trail will have a gravel surface to improve accessibility.

The proposed project will provide improved habitat and groundwater elevations that will benefit many different species of wetland and riparian-dependent wildlife species that utilize the wildlife area, including 42 mammalian species, 81 species of birds, 16 species of reptiles and amphibians, and steelhead and fall run Chinook salmon. The project is consistent with the goals of the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, and the CalFed Ecosystem Restoration Program.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed by staff, are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Wetland Restoration	
Topographic survey	10,000.00
Drafting	2,920.00
Engineering and biological services	13,670.00
Earthwork – levee	12,550.00
Earthwork – ditches and constructed swales	3,500.00
Water control structures	12,000.00
Diversion structure in Carr/Kohn ditch	5,600.00
Splitter box in ditch	3,000.00
Establish vegetation on new levees and ditchbanks	950.00
Gravel on levee trail	1,800.00
Riparian Restoration	
Site Assessment	2,400.00
Site plan	9,600.00
Site preparation	18,000.00
Site layout	3,600.00
Irrigation system installation	20,400.00
Collection of plant materials	9,960.00
Site planting	28,000.00
Care of plants (irrigation, weeding, protection)	63,840.00
Plant monitoring	11,400.00
Project sign	1,000.00
Administration	31,670.00
Contingencies	23,460.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$299,620.00
Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$260,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	4,950.00
Ducks Unlimited	34,670.00

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:

\$299,620.00

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$260,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(2); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department as planned.

Motion carried.

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| 42. | Fitzhugh Creek, Modoc County | \$1,332,000.00 |
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The subject property includes the lower reaches of the north and south forks of Fitzhugh Creek, the confluence of the two forks and about one-half mile of the mainstream of Fitzhugh Creek. The area at the confluence of the north and south forks is a large meadow which offers excellent wetland, riparian and riverine habitat. Two permanent ponds (about one acre each) and one seasonal pond exist on the property along with associated wetlands. The current owner has been a participant in the Private Land Management Program (1994 through 1999) and has improved habitat for deer and antelope. The subject property provides important winter and summer range for deer and antelope. Fitzhugh Creek provides good habitat for, and supports a healthy population of native redband and introduced brown trout, and could provide habitat for the endangered Modoc sucker. The endangered willow flycatcher and threatened sandhill crane are also likely to occur on the property.

The DFG will be managing this property. Primary management objectives are to provide public fishing and hunting access, to continue proper management of deer and antelope habitat, and to manage the land and aquatic environment for perpetuation of threatened and endangered species and to protect archeological resources. Management is intended to maintain this land in a natural and healthy condition to support self-sustaining populations of fish, plants, mammals, birds and other wildlife.

The owner has agreed to sell this property for \$1,300,000.00, the appraised value approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated \$22,000.00 will be needed for appraisal costs, DGS' review fees, escrow fees and other related costs, bringing the total allocation being requested for this project to \$1,322,000.00.

This acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of interests in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Ms. Muzik reported that John Eckland, the property owner; Mike Dean and Don Koch, Regional Manager, Department of Fish and Game and Patricia Cantrall, Modoc County Board of Supervisors, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Wright reported that the Wildlife Conservation Board received a letter from the Modoc County Board of Supervisors and that copies of the letter were distributed to the Board members.

Mr. Sean Curtis, representing the Modoc County Board of Supervisors, addressed the Board and in detail explained that the County believes this proposal to be misrepresented in the project description, poorly researched, inappropriately funded and unneeded. In the County's letter, it is suggested that this item be removed from the Board's agenda until a more accurate and scientifically valid proposal could be presented and that, until such time, the County must oppose the proposal as not being in the best interest of the citizens of the County or the taxpayers of California.

Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding the County's concerns about threatened and endangered species, as described in the letter, the appraisal issue and the appropriate use of funds. Mr. Wright requested Don Koch, Regional Manager of the Department of Fish and Game, respond to Mr. Curtis' issues. Mr. Koch stated that DFG staff is fully aware of the County's concerns regarding potential constraints that threatened and endangered species will put on the land. He stated that DFG staff met with County staff at least six times over the last two years, once with the Board of Supervisors, three times with the local Fish and Game Commission and twice with the Lands Committee. He stated that in the DFG's draft Land Acquisition Evaluation is a document that is made and used as a working document for DFG staff and that it

notes potential Willow Flycatcher habitat is present on site and does

not say that the Willow Flycatcher is present. Mr. Koch stated that the management of the diverse habitat values should not conflict with hunting. Mr. Klass inquired as to the presence of endangered species on the property. Mr. Koch stated that the DFG is unaware if Modoc Suckers are present but it is believed the potential habitat exists on the property and that controlled management will improve that habitat. Mr. Flores asked Mr. Curtis if the Board of Supervisors were unanimous in support behind the County's letter. Mr. Curtis stated there was some opposition to the letter. Mr. Flores asked Mr. Curtis if he is opposed to the acquisition, no matter what. Mr. Curtis stated the Board of Supervisors would have no logical reason for opposing the acquisition if this project was put forth for all of the purposes that were listed for the threatened and endangered species. He also stated the Board of Supervisors felt it was not a good use of money to acquire ground for provisional hunting and fishing in the middle of 250,000 acres of similar land that is far more easily accessible to the public than this property. Mr. Flores explained that the Wildlife Conservation Board acquires property such as this throughout the State.

Ms. Pat Cantrall, Third District Supervisor, Modoc County, stated the Board did take exception to the letter. She stated that she believed the reason some people have been upset is because of a possible misunderstanding of the proposal and that most people in her District are supportive of this acquisition, except for one person residing in Cedar Pass. She stated the property has been fenced off for many years and those who wish to see it open are very pleased the property will be accessible for greater hunting and fishing opportunities. Ms. Cantrall stated that Josie Johnson, Modoc County Assessor, attended the local Fish and Game Commission meeting and that the Commission held a special meeting after the land use commission meeting. At that meeting, it was a unanimous decision not to accept the project as presented because the County could not afford to lose the in lieu fees. She stated that the difference in monies would not be that great, but if the Bureau of Land Management were to take over from the DFG, the County is more greatly assured of getting from 72 to 86 percent of the in lieu funding. Ms. Cantrall reported that she has been asked by the local Fish and Game Commission to inquire as to whether or not the Board could find funding for the in lieu fees. Mr. Wright stated that this question has been asked many times in the past and that the Board does not have the authority to pay lost tax revenue. As a final note, Ms. Cantrall emphasized that property owners have the right to sell their property to whomever they want to.

Mr. Flores asked if there was further testimony. Mr. Dan Dellinger, speaking on behalf of Senator Rico Oller, respectfully requested the Board accommodate the County on their requests.

In regard to the County's and Senator Oller's concerns regarding regulation changes and catch and release, Mr. Koch reported that he recently sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors, indicating that at this time the DFG did not have any evidence to indicate any necessary changes in angling or hunting regulations on the property as a result of the acquisition. He added that the DFG has tried to do everything it could to

work through the County's concerns.

Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding the appraisal. Mr. Wright first explained the funding source. He stated that the funding used for this acquisition is from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786, and it speaks to acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. It does not require that species are actually listed to use those funds and that since such habitat exists, we believe the funding source is appropriate. He stated there are other funding sources that could have been used for this property but the Board chose, in this instance, this funding source because it was most appropriate considering the resource values. In response to the appraisal issue raised in the County's letter, Mr. Wright stated there were two appraisals completed on this property. He reported that the first appraisal was rejected by the landowner because the landowner did not believe it reflected the market value of the land, therefore the property was reappraised, which is not uncommon. The second appraisal did come in higher than the first appraisal and it was reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services. Mr. Curtis stated that two comparable sales listed in the staff report were used in the process of developing the value of the property and that at least one of those two did not sell, therefore the appraisal was flawed. Mr. Wright stated that neither of those comparables were used in the appraisal that was approved. The appraisal that was approved looked at twenty comparable properties that sold on the market.

Mr. Hight reported that he has spent many hours on Fitzhugh Creek and that it is a lovely parcel and it will provide terrific hunting and fishing opportunities in addition to picnicking.

Mr. Klass stated that after hearing statements from staff and in response to the County's letter, it was very reassuring to hear that the Department of General Services used more than two comparables and that the law allows the Board to use the money for habitat, whether or not species are present, and he supported the acquisition.

Mr. Flores stated that if he thought for a moment that the Department was trying to acquire the property under false pretenses and use some of the animals listed as potential endangered species to shut it down, he would have some concerns, but everything he has read is to protect and enhance the area. He also agreed with Ms. Cantrall's statement that one has the ability to sell their land to whomever they choose.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; allocate \$1,332,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (b/c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,332,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (b/c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- **43. South Fork Kern River (Schaeffer Fish Barrier Improvements), \$1,181,539.00
Tulare County**

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to complete structural improvements to the Schaeffer Fish Barrier located on the South Fork Kern River, within the Inyo National Forest, Tulare County, approximately 10 miles west of Highway 395 and 50 miles northeast of Lake Isabella. The purpose of the project is to prevent upstream migration of nonnative fish (brown and rainbow trout) into the native habitat of the Volcano Creek golden trout, California's State fish and thought by many as the most colorful trout in the world. The Volcano Creek golden trout are native only to the South Fork Kern River and nearby Golden Trout Creek.

In the 1960s, introduced brown trout were found in the headwaters of the South Fork Kern River where golden trout reside. Since brown trout are voracious predators, they began eating native golden trout and grew rapidly to a large size. Brown trout numbers increased as golden trout numbers plummeted. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, three barriers to prevent upstream movement of brown trout were constructed across the South Fork Kern River which runs through the Kern Plateau, alternating between mountain canyons and meadows. Afterwards, all brown trout were eliminated upstream of the lowermost Schaeffer Barrier. The uppermost Ramshaw Barrier consisted of modifications made to an existing waterfall. The middle (Templeton Barrier) and Schaeffer barriers were constructed using wire gabion baskets filled with rock and stacked to form dams. Since construction, the wire used in the baskets has eroded much more rapidly than predicted due to rusting and impingement by sand transported by the river. Brown trout were found above Schaeffer Barrier in the early 1990s and had moved to the base of Templeton Barrier. The Templeton Barrier was restored with a rock and cement dam in 1996, and no brown trout have been found above this barrier to date.

In 1997, the center section of the lowermost Schaeffer Barrier collapsed after several years of being eroded away. In the fall of 1998, the U.S. Forest Service made temporary repairs to the Schaeffer Barrier to shore up the center of the barrier and prevent further collapse. In spite of this effort, additional brown trout and now rainbow trout from downstream waters have moved upstream of the Schaeffer Barrier. Further movement upstream is being blocked by the recently reconstructed Templeton Barrier, but nonnative brown and rainbow trout currently have access to 53 miles of native golden trout habitat between Schaeffer and Templeton barriers.

While brown trout reduce golden trout populations through predation, rainbow trout present a greater threat because they can interbreed with golden trout, resulting in hybridization and loss of genetic integrity. Due to the concern over the potential loss and/or extinction of the golden trout in this area, the DFG has worked to design a project to prevent upstream movement of non-native fish populations. The Kern Plateau Watershed Working Group, consisting of individual and groups with an interest in the Kern Plateau watershed management, has recognized this project as a key component of the reconstruction of the South Fork Kern River to a natural functioning condition.

The reconstruction of the failing Schaeffer Fish Barrier is to include installation of a reinforced concrete structure and a large rock concrete apron immediately downstream and adjacent to the new barrier. The structure will direct the river flow over the center spillway that will have a vertical drop onto the apron. A spillway apron makes upstream passage more difficult by eliminating the plunge pool downstream of the barrier and deflecting the standing wave further downstream. A standing wave is sometimes created immediately downstream from falls and trout can use this wave to enhance their jumping ability. This new structure would have an overpour surface and would be highly durable, with a life expectancy of at least 100-150 years. It would also be very stable, hydraulically efficient and highly effective at preventing the upstream movement of trout. Vertical height of the structure will be three feet higher than the existing barrier to decrease the likelihood of upstream movement of all fish at all flows. Substantial cost will be incurred to construct the concrete structure. Adding to that cost is the fact that access to the site is along a seven-mile-long dirt road and most of the construction equipment and materials will have to be flown in by helicopter.

In 2001, the DFG entered into an agreement with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to fund the needed improvements to the Schaeffer Fish Barrier. Construction was initiated on the project but was halted in 2002 due to the McNally fire. Due to safety concerns, construction crews were required to leave and remove all equipment and supplies from the area. Subsequent fiscal difficulties required DFG to withdraw a portion of the project funding. The DFG has asked for funding assistance from the Board to cover the withdrawn funds and the additional estimated mobilization and demobilization costs due to the fire. Plans now call for the project to go forward in June and be completed by October, 2003.

The original estimated construction costs have been updated to reflect additional estimated costs for construction administration, concrete, and mobilization and demobilization after the fire.

The total cost estimates for the proposal, which have been developed by the DFG and DWR, are as follows:

Description:	Estimated Cost
Mobilization/demobilization	\$510,000.00
Dewatering	45,500.00
Selective clearing	4,500.00
Earthwork	26,000.00
Foundation excavation	13,750.00
Foundation backfill	4,500.00
Reinforcing steel	242,400.00
Concrete	522,500.00
Cyclopean concrete	60,000.00
Dental concrete	56,000.00
Additional mobilization/demobilization	70,000.00
Construction design and administration	355,000.00
Contingencies	91,850.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:	\$2,002,000.00

Proposed Funding Breakdown:	
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,181,404.00
Department of Fish and Game	820,596.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING:	\$2,002,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG is responsible for completing all necessary California Environmental Quality Act requirements and obtaining all necessary permits.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,181,539.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 50), Section 79565 for project costs and General Services review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,181,539.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Prop 50), Section 79565 for project costs and General Services review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Wright
Executive Director

Attachments

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on May 14, 2003, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$1,212,720,793.40. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

The statement includes projects completed under the 1964 State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act, the 1970 Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Bond Fund, the Bagley Conservation Fund, the State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act of 1974, the General Fund, the Energy Resources Fund, the Environmental License Plate Fund, the State, Urban and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976, the 1984 Parklands Fund, the 1984 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Bond Act, the California Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Conservation Act of 1988, Cigarette and Tobacco Products Surtax Fund of 1988, California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, the Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act of 1996, the Natural Resources Infrastructure Fund, the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund, Forest Resources Improvement Fund, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000, Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Act of 2000, California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund, Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 and the Wildlife Restoration Fund. In addition to projects completed with the above funding sources, this statement includes tax credits awarded under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000. The tax credits are not reflected in the total amount allocated to projects.

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects	\$16,006,219.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement	24,607,180.88
Reservoir Construction or Improvement	\$ 5,518,592.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement	14,788,961.69
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams	547,719.86
Marine Habitat	646,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects	3,105,288.26
C. Fishing Access Projects	45,390,878.94
Coastal and Bay	\$ 3,539,270.08
River and Aqueduct Access	12,857,933.99
Lake and Reservoir Access	9,015,632.69
Piers	19,978,042.18
D. Game Farm Projects	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement	1,101,120,070.01
Wildlife Areas (General)	\$275,176,497.89
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development	5,596,933.74

Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat)	413,100,144.59
Land Conservation Area	6,981,557.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements	17,289,858.22
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements	17,585,543.59
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants	365,389,534.80
F. Hunting Access Projects	484,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases)	11,945,430.29
H. Special Project Allocations	1,389,820.29
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects	11,080,312.80
State Owned	\$1,244,851.07
Grants	9,835,461.73
J. Sales and/or exchanges	549,088.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ...	(33,508,511.50)
Statutory plans	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat	(6,232,435.50)
Agricultural lands	(712,726.00)
Water and water rights	(269,500.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources	(26,293,850.00)
Total Allocated to Projects	\$1,212,720,793.40